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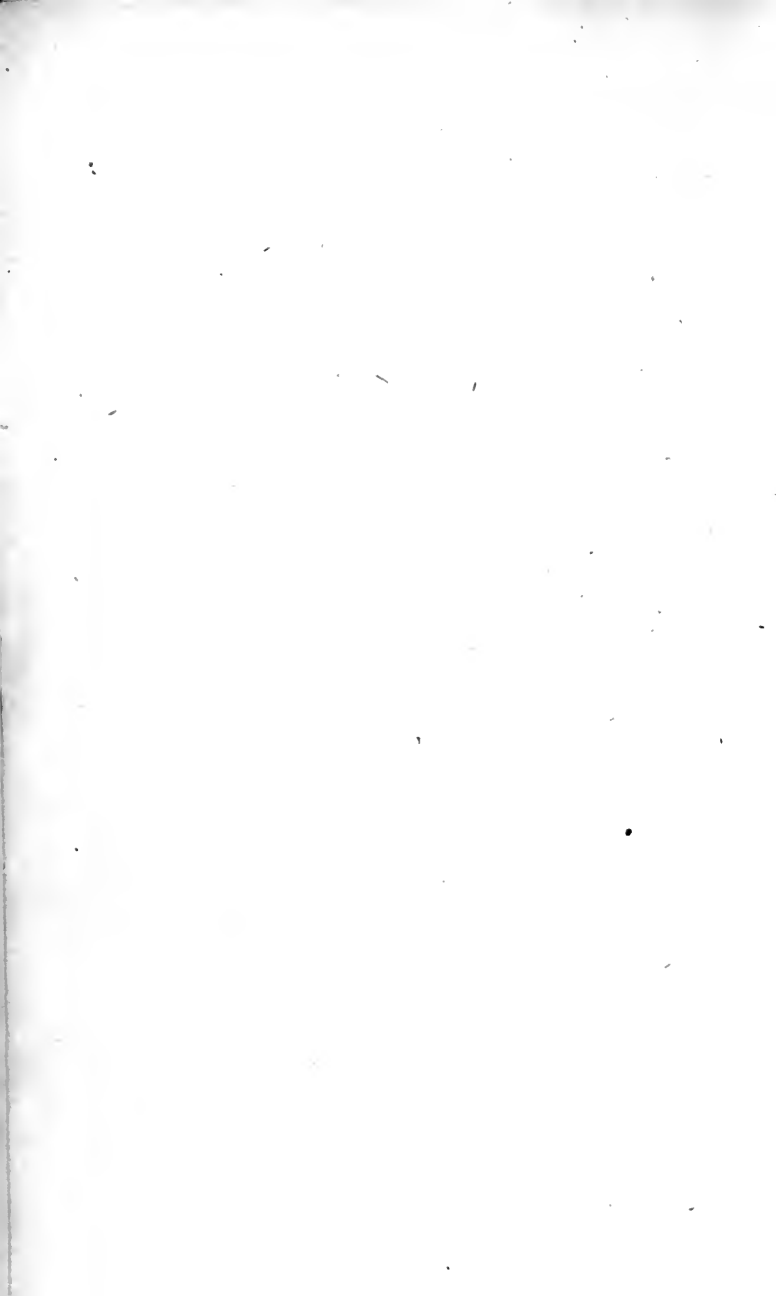
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To BLS Boodichon (founder of Briton)

for the author.

Emmanuel Palfrey.





P R É M I C E S,

BY

E. FOXTON.

BOSTON:
TICKNOR AND FIELDS.
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ERRATUM.

Page 37, line 16, *for* around, *read* a round.

H I L D A :

A L O V E - S O N G .

“ One
God-satisfied and earth-undone.”

ISOBEL'S CHILD.

“ Were it wisely done,
If we, who cannot gaze above, should walk the earth alone?
If we, whose virtue is so weak, should have a will so strong,
And stand blind on the rocks, to choose the right path from the wrong?
To choose perhaps a love-lit hearth, instead of love and heaven, —
A single rose, for a rose-tree which beareth seven times seven? ”

THE LAY OF THE BROWN ROSARY.

PRELUDE.

“ COME, Ned, a good hour by the dial
You ’ve moped or you ’ve dozed, my dear lad ;
And now it is barely eleven ;
You know that ’s too bad !

“ I ’ve reviewed the Assembly all over,
From the excellent time of Zerrahn,
Baskets, bonbons, bonmots, to the peerless
Poursuite of Miss Anne,

“ With that humor peculiar and happy
That is wont, if not plaudits, to earn
Some response to your most humble servant ;
And now 't is your turn.”

“ Forgive me ; I know I've been stupid.
The rheumatism e'en on men's wits,
In such weather, may fairly be pardoned
For seizing by fits ;

“ And to-night, from the old storied countries
As comes weeping and sobbing the blast,
To my ear it seems burdened with legends
From realms of the past.

“ Stir the cannel. A song I'll repeat you,
If you like, that I heard through the rain,
While the dull drops like tears on a tombstone
Plashed on the pane.”

“ Though I think that the east is that ill wind
Which blows to no man any good,
As your muse can't be worse than your musing,
I yield to your mood.”

“ There 's a box of sardines then, some biscuit,
And claret; and when you have supped,
Just fill up your meerschaum with bird's-eye,
And don't interrupt.”

PART FIRST.

ON the mountain sits eyried a castle ;
A river rolls darkly below ;
The high solemn stars 'twixt huge clouds look
That over them go,

Like tears by God's pitying eyes dropped
On the forehead of blind, hopeless Night,
That returns him straight glances of wonder,
Tearful and bright ;

And a maiden doth gaze with fond yearning
Through the dark from her turret above,
Who deems, while the Infinite waits her,
'T is sweet earthly love.

She kneels at her lattice, and murmurs,
With locked fingers, and blushes between :
“ How truly, O God, I have loved him,
Thou only hast seen

“ Through the veil of my heart's inmost temple, —
I breathed it not even to Thee, —
Since, a fair, frolic boy, on the greensward
He gambolled with me.

“ When he left me, the greensward, the castle,
The grove, and the river grew dim
In the mist of my blank eyes, and vanished.
My soul followed him

“ From the haunts where he sported beside me,
To toil in the march with armed men,
To pant in the glare of the desert,
To choke in the fen.

“ While my damsels sat singing around me,
As we wrought, scarce their lays could I hear,
For the death-roar of grappling battalions,
The trump shrill and clear.

“ He won glory and spurs ; and they whispered,
‘ For a queen walketh Hilda too proud.’
He was wounded and taken ; I wasted
As if for my shroud.

“ To me memory tells only his story ;
My youth’s idle tale is forgot ;
It walked in its sleep, seeing all things
As though they were not ;

“ Till his herald he sent, on its slumber
 With his suit, like the angel, to break,
That the saint who dreamed, dying, of heaven
 In heaven doth awake.

“ What more can I ask ? With all blessings
 My heart is o’erflowing and rife !
But this, E’en as Thou hast blest me, may
 I bless him for life,

“ Fill brimming his fortune’s gold chalice,
 Or myself as a shield interpose,
Though my heart’s blood be drained in the conflict,
 ’Twixt him and his woes.”

Gay Rosalie sprang o’er the threshold :

“ Prepare thee, sweet coz, O prepare !
With torches the hall glares ! Before thee
 Will Regnar be there !”

And no gems held the casket of Hilda
So peerless, the maiden to deck,
As the gorget of arms white and dimpled
That clasped round her neck.

From her soon, all arrayed in her bower,
Her maids with a reverent stare
Fell back, with a murmur in chorus
Of "Is she not fair?"

But when was the court without courtiers,
Or the heiress not rare to behold,
In the eyes of the judges keen-sighted
That look to her gold?

"As my cast of white hawks," swore the old Earl,
With honest conviction. But ne'er
In a father's eyes duteous daughter
Showed other than fair.

And her picture proclaimed her a Venus,
Gliding up through a sun-gilded wave
Of bright tresses, the spleen's doleful victims
With laughter to save.

But the caitiff that drew it had stolen
The light and ethereal grace,
And the summer hues blooming and beaming
O'er Rosalie's face.

As a sweet landscape sparkling with day
To the same 'neath the moon, of twin mothers
Those daughters bore faces unlike, yet
Like, one another's.

But said Rosalie, "Fair as an angel!"
And Rosalie knew not to lie;
And the soft-flushing face in the mirror
Confirmed her reply.

For Hilda was fair, with a beauty
Kept sacred, unnoticed, unknown
To the crowd, garnered up for the prize of
Affection alone.

Dark hair, thick and long, like a nun's veil
In its sombre and shadowy flow ; —
A cheek smooth and white as the shroud of
A still, buried woe,

Till with fond gladness dimpling and blushing ; —
Eyes that dreamily soared, dark as night,
Save her soul lit within their clear windows,
In jubilee bright,

Its festival lamps, whose beams vestal
Must needs then be charily hid,
Full often, beneath the fringed fall of
Each maidenly lid ; —

And lips well-nigh too calm and queenly,
Till wreathed to a smile or a kiss; —
Could the glance of cold lover discover
A beauty like this?

“ Will he love? ” she to Rosalie whispered.
The vigilant Earl chose to hear,
And, firing right angrily, bade her
To banish all fear.

“ What wouldst thou, thou whimperer? I’ve given
thee
In troth to a good knight and true;
If false, he should hang in his fetters
Without more ado,

“ First shriek, and then smell, and then rattle,
Like marauding old Ethelbert’s men,
From the walls of my keep on the hill, though
Thou pleaded as then ! ”

He came. The hall, thronged with attendants,
Alone with his presence seemed filled.
Her ear and her heart drank his raptures.
Those raptures were stilled.

She raised her glad eyes. On his face, where
He knelt just beside her, they fell.
'T was a face as of one that to love and
To life bids farewell.

Fair Rosalie, standing beside her,
Turned blushing and frowning away.
He rose, and once more would address her,
But naught could he say.

The cold it is chilling, that freezes
On the front of the loved loyal dead ;
On that of the living beloved
Perchance 't is more dread.

PART SECOND.

FROM the banquet-hall straight to his chamber
The knight, stalking gloomily, passed,
And, as waiting the headsman, a beadsman
Demanded in haste.

The deaf foster-mother of Hilda,
In ambush who lay at the gate,
To the buttery dragged him, the instant
He passed 'neath the grate,

In spite of his mild protestations,
And covered the board with good cheer;
“Thou, meagre with fasting and famine,
Saint, taste of my beer.

“Art cold?” And she piled on the fagots,
Till the mortified saint, being fat,
With a martyr-like fiery endurance
Nigh smoked as he sat.

“It sufficeth!” he cried; but she heard not
Till off cowl and cloak did he cast;
“I will cleanse them,” quoth she, and departed
And made the door fast.

“The holy man waits in the chapel,
Sir knight.” The knight reeled as if drunk,
With wine or with woe, where “What wilt thou?”
Breathed faintly the monk.

“ Though I see thee not well through the bars where
Thou sittest, in secret and shade,
As sitteth heaven’s chronicler angel,
To hear me,” he said ;

(The starting monk shrank at the first word,
In his far corner further drew back,
And drew closer around his dim features
The cowl’s shrouding black ;)

“ By the accents so gentle and soft of
Thy scarce-heard and faltering tongue,
I think thee no dead-hearted old man.
Canst feel for the young ? ”

“ As I feel for myself,” low he faltered,
And sad ; “ had not Fate played me foul,
And Love played me false, I had never
Put on the cowl.”

“ Then list ; and, if mercy ’s in heaven,
Show mercy ! ” the knight did begin ;
“ I am bound by an oath, and to break it
Or keep it were sin.

“ Can I soil my clear knighthood with vow-breach ?
To Hilda is plighted my troth !
Shall I swear before God’s holy altar
To love whom I loathe ?

“ What say I ? I meant not, good father — ”
“ Say on. It was naught but a pain
That shot through my heart ” ; and he gasped, “ Nay,
Perchance through my brain.”

“ I meant no reproach to a maiden,
Famed stainless in mind as in race.
Should I loathe not a glorified seraph
In Rosalie’s place ? ”

“ Then what fiend bade thee bait thy base snare for
The peace of a maid's harmless youth,
With a suit that her fond fancy dressed in
Her own princely truth ? ”

His spurred heel struck the spark from the pavement

Where he stood. “ Nay, my suit it was true,
When urged, as her faith that received it !
Not false did I woo !

“ From the day that her soft, girlish fingers
Yielded mine to the clasp of steel glove,
In battle and tilt I wooed glory
Undreaming of love.

“ Fair damsels I sought for their peril,
But tarried not long for their thanks,
And, ere well they had hailed me ‘ Deliverer ! ’
Pricked on in the ranks.

“ In the listed and bannered arena,
So I made the proud trophy my own,
What recked I if the queen’s hand that gave it
Were snowy or brown ?

“ Many grew the wide fields and strong castles
That I’d conquered ; and won was coy Fame.
Then methought it were well to win also
A dutiful dame,

“ In my absence to rule my possessions,
A nurse with fond patience to care
For my wounds, and a gentle young mother
To fondle mine heir.

“ But of damsels from childhood to manhood,
My boyhood’s old playmate alone,
From Palestine’s vineyards to Albion,
Had I ever known.

“ Report fairly spake of her virtues.

In ill hour my addresses I paid ;

In ill hour did her sire, through my envoy,

Accord me the maid ;

“ In ill hour did a limner, that lied, fill

My sleep with false dreams of her beauty,

And turn to wild rapture and worship .

My purposed calm duty.

“ I came, and deemed, ravished, that only

The half of her charms had been told !

The very air round her grew brighter,

And smiled to behold !

“ My soul flew through my lips to keep time, as

My eyes towards her shot their first glance.

It will not return ; and I never

Can break from my trance !

“ But in wrath she turned lovely away, ere
I knew I had hailed her my bride,
And left me but the dim, dreary shadow
That drooped at her side.”

He groaned; but the monk, with clasped hands,
cried:

“ True is Rosalie, then! Say again!
In truth, hadst thou never beheld her,
Nor loved her, till then?”

“ He who asks me such questions, good father,
For a cleftless, needs thank a shorn crown;
Yet to thee will I swear it,” the grim knight
Rejoined with a frown.

“ But how shall I right this wronged maiden?
To mimic the lover were vain,
And proffer false heart for her true one.
I ’m used not to feign.

“ If I don this hacked mail for thy sackcloth,
And quit for the cloister my tent,
Can my fasts and my vigils, of Heaven
Buy back her content ?

“ With this brand, that I wrenched from the Soldan,
Shall I bid her my life at her feet
Spill, my pledge to redeem, and her honor ?
Such death it were sweet.

“ I will front her grim sire and his headsman ! ”
“ Nay,” said the monk, rising, “ No more !
Be happy. Thy penitence merits
My good news in store.

“ Pale shade of betrothed, or of troth-plight,
No longer shall stand in thy way ;
For Hilda in secret a vestal
Is vowed from this day.

“ I release thee.” “ Release ? Thou ! ” “ *Absolve*, I
Absolve thee,” the monk stammered swift ;
“ Benedicite. Prithee go hence ;— I
Am new at a shrift.”

From the aisle where she watched stole the old
crone ;

But the buttery monk, ere released
And replaced in his robe, had time ample
To finish his feast.

“ The hag ! Has she washed it ? ” he grumbled.
“ The cowl ’s wet, from cheeks to the ears,
As it ever was erst in my homesick
First cloistered years ! ”

Then in the confessional dozed he
Long hours. Still the knight did not come ;
And chapfallen, as from a fool’s errand,
He stiffly limped home.

PART THIRD.

SHE hath wept on her knees to her sire,
And prayed, with a low, heart-wrung moan,
“ Wouldst thou languish at last on thy death-bed
Unsoothed and alone ?

“ Send not thy child hence, in the cold world
To shiver uncherished, and pine ;
No other love hath it to give her
So tender as thine.”

He chid, and then raved, and then softened.

While a stranger shame strayed o'er his face,
Confounded, with wandering glances,
He sought the knight's grace.

"My girl she is petted, and wayward,
And will not be parted from me ;
I would give a large dower in her stead with
My niece Rosalie."

She hath clasped round yon arching throat swan-
like

Her own nuptial necklace of pearls ;
And her own silvery veil hangs its stars o'er
The bride's sunny curls.

With the white silken robe, that her maids long
With silver enwrought, hath she laced,
And spanned with her own jewelled girdle,
Fair Rosalie's waist.

Her purse of broad pieces is emptied
To make richer the right queenly dower.
She hath strewn with fresh myrtle and roses
The nuptial bower.

She hath prayed in the church, grave and seemly,
While his office was sped by the priest,
The prize hath adjudged at the tourney,
And reigned o'er the feast;

She hath trod a gay measure with Regnar,
And smiled with a courteous cheer
On scant words, that, for Rosalie sighing,
He forced for her ear.

But when fond, grateful Rosalie pressed him,
“Now, is she not fair to behold,
And sweet-hearted?” he said, “Nay, I know not;
Is she not cold?”

And Hilda was cold as high Hecla,
Flinging back in her bleak virgin snow
The sun's arctic smile, while her surging
Hid heart burns below.

She hath mounted the bride on her palfrey.
The drawbridge is passed. Grating, falls
Behind the last steed the portcullis.
How empty the walls !

"'T is done ; and for life I have blessed him."
Thus, retreading the rush-rustling floor,
She said. " Had I been his beloved,
What had I won more ? "

PART FOURTH.

THREE years have crawled by. From the castle,
Still as erst, fierce and grim the Earl goes,
And cometh back wounded and fiercer,
From bouts with his foes.

Still as erst, Hilda watches his coming,
And smooths with a soft hand his bed,
Unscared by his furies impartial,
That burst o'er her head.

Still duly she orders her household,
Presides o'er loom, needle, and wheel;
With the lofty grace no tale that telleth
Of woe or of weal,

To bower or to banquet makes welcome,
As courtly, the courtliest guest;
And to herald of war or meek vassal
Declares her behest.

Of degree as his hopes high, comes many
A noble and hero, to pay
His court to the heiress. As many
Go lowering away.

But, from far courts and countries returning,
Well guerdoned the wandering wight
Who can tell her of Rosalie's glories,
Or deeds of her knight.

The snow of her cheek might have wasted,
But ne'er was seen wet by a tear,
Till the old foster-mother in shroud-sleep
Lay stiff as her bier.

Her soul's sluices, once openly opened,
Refused at her bidding to close.
In the wake of the freed woe, rushed after
A flood of pent woes.

The gossips and leeches in vain strove
To ease her mysterious grief.
She must seek, at the shrine of St. Agnes,
A pilgrim, relief.

The bristling spears hedged from beholder
The black-flowing weeds of the maid;
With hoof-dint and arms' clang alone rang
The mute cavalcade.

In a valley's dank grove, after nightfall,
They found, after long days and search,
Stayed with ivy's slight arms from its ruin,
The lone, crumbling church.

"Take meat, and repose, noble lady ;
Admit some of thy train to be near."
"Guard only the gates from intruders.
What have I to *fear* ? "

At the chink of the traceried window
Held her cresset the cold, veiled moon,
Till she, groping 'mid tombs to the altar,
Fell wearily down.

"O God! Were there one 'mid Thy creatures,
That swarm round me and leave me alone,
To whom I might breathe, in my anguish,
How I am undone!

“ Why didst Thou, divine, self-sufficient,
Woe and weakness enthroned far above,
This poor human heart fashion for loving,
And make none to love ?

“ The meanest my vassal or bondmaid
Is dear to some churl of her choice, —
To a babe whose small eyes wink and twinkle
At sound of her voice,

“ Or a mother, within whose unnurtured
Coarse bosom is still one soft nest,
Her child to receive, with its sorrows,
And lull them to rest.

“ No quick ear is turned at my footstep ;
No eager hand hurries to mine ;
No face owns as brightly my coming
As dim Dawn's the brine.

“ My sire waxes old ; and anon there
On all the wide earth shall be none
To say masterly, ‘ Thus do thou, Hilda,’
Or, ‘ That leave undone.’

“ Take back this lone life when he dieth ;
No cheek shall be wet that is dry,
When, ’mid these thine unsuffering children,
Unsuffering I lie.

“ They watch not by night on moist pillow ;
Their measure of tears it is shed ;
They dream not of bliss, to awaken
To woe, — happy dead !

“ Brawling Noon breaketh not on their slumbers ;
Nor the sly peering light of the morning
Leereth into their faces, their dull peace
To turn into mourning.”

She slept ; for the stillness around her
 Stole as soft on her travail-worn brain,
As steals the soft slumber of morn on
 A long night of pain.

She woke ; and a brightness was round her,
 And dazzling and blinding white mist.
She woke ; for a presence of blessing
 Had lightly, she wist,

As fresh air heaves the breast of freed prisoner,
 Eased her bosom from weight of spent sobs, —
As the great heart of Light through the clouds stirs
 Our own with its throbs,

Had thrilled her with sunbeams returning
 Of the joyance of days long ago, —
And set to empyreal music
 Her life's dream of woe,

As the mother's soft lullaby sung by
The cradle, and footstep's fall light,
Turns the fevered babe's terrified visions
To shapes of delight.

Through her sealed lids, pressed down with efful-
gence,
By effulgence made glassy, her soul
Saw transfigured the chapel expand, as to hold
The infinite whole.

Vaulted arches and trefoils are rainbows,
Warped or stretched, as may fit, high and far.
For each crystal that lurked in the granite,
There twinkles a star.

Where each corbel clasped pillar and roof's rib,
More vast than conglomerate in one
All the orbs and the space we see nightly,
Shines fixed around sun.

Volumed incense, like sunset-clouds tinted,
From altar to roof fills the air,
Whence glad, solemn-faced cherubs peep, upward
Bound, freighted with prayer.

Gorgeous angels glow through the stained windows,
With waving sublime of white wings,
And lips awful, whose quietness breathes out
Unspeakable things.

Through the long, endless vistas of columns
The redeemed walk, palm-branches that bear,
In the fragrance of white baptized lilies
That circle their hair,

With cadence of soft, steady footfalls.
Their glistering raiments are swayed
By the surge of their grandly sweet singing,
More than by their tread.

On and on, in procession triumphal,
Bliss nigh too intense for a smile
Shining out through each feature transparent,
Advance they, and while

Through bright present to future yet brighter,
From the bliss-haunted depths of the past,
Calm Eternity marshals them onward,
Nor loiter nor haste.

She felt, with a mixture supernal
Of rapture and torment, her soul,
Still quickening and swelling, expand as to hold
The infinite whole.

The cloud-pillar pregnant with fire,
Swelling tremulous up through the nave,
As of yore in the desert, flashed open.
Within its light cave,

Her sight slowly schooled to endurance
And uplifted, before her she knew
A form like that which shines on the night of
The lone watcher, who

Hath read till, his taper expiring,
He sleeps, his head resting upon —
Where resteth his heart so securely —
The Gospel of John.

Round it thrown, as by mockers prophetic,
The imperial purple rolled down.
A glory of thorns incandescent
It wore as a crown.

Its heavenly hands, wide spread in blessing,
As when on the cross, all men o'er,
The prints of earth's guerdon of iron
Still patiently bore.

Its face showed as an altar, whereon pure
Humanity unto the Godhead,
In transports of bliss and of anguish,
Was awfully wedded.

Floods on floods, that no angel could fathom,
From its deep eyes, of pathos did flow
For its followers triumphant around it,
And struggling below.

A light that was clearer than noonday
O'er it poured from the zenith above.
Played upward and downward incessant
Betwixt, a white dove.

"Arise!" said the voice, that of old sent
The quick thaw through Death's icy breast;
"Come unto me, thou heavy laden
And weary, and rest.

“Fear not. I am gentle and lowly.

My heart hath been piercèd, and bled.
I had not with the birds and the foxes
A rest for my head.

“And the Son of Man, e'en in his glory,
While the hard earth that boasts him to-day
Turns his flock, in their hunger, and thirsting,
And sickness, away,

“In the mystical union that binds him
With them, while his blest round him shine,
Is doomed in their sickness and loneliness
And bondage to pine.

“In the world dost thou find tribulation ;
But I have the world overcome.
I prepare in my Father's safe mansion
Already thy home.

“Do the will of my Father; and henceforth
Deserted no more thou shalt be,
A sister beloved and cherished,
A mother, to me!”

It ceased. From a garland of seraphs
Wide o'er it wreathed, 'neath, and around,
Here and there, in and out, 'mid the vapor,
Some floated to ground.

Rome writes few of their names in her canons.
They followed, in sorrow and dearth,
Unnoticed, unblessed, save in blessing,
Through by-ways, on earth,

Their Master's lone, half-effaced footsteps.
This boon in return God bestoweth,—
They follow him also in heaven
Wherever he goeth.

Bending o'er her with pitying glances,
Yet gladsome, they spake, as they stood,
Things sweet,—as they whisper o'er cradles,—
And half understood : —

“ The cross it is rugged, and galleth
The weak flesh and spirit full sore.
The cross it is pricelessly precious ;
He bore it before.

“ 'T was the legacy last he bequeathed us ;
With the death-pang his bosom did heave ;
Naught else save his peace to his own had
Man left him to leave.

“ 'T was the ladder he climbed to his kingdom,
While the earth with his darkness grew dim.
Through their darkness his followers forsaken
It lifteth to him.” —

“ Wouldst thou win thee fond hearts ? Come with
us then,
And seek in the huts of the poor.
The starving will scarce turn thee empty
Away from their door.

“ The love of the humble and lowly,
O Hilda, thou wilt not despise ;
'T is as rich as the service of princes
In light of God's eyes.” —

“ Spurn not time-bounded life ; though it doom thee
To loneliness, sickness, and fear ;
'T is the short tossing tempest, that maketh
The haven more dear ;

“ 'T is the toil and the vigil, that softens
And smooths the deep pillow of rest ;
'T is the fast to the feast that supplieth
Its keen, hungry zest ;

“ Within its base earthy clod teeming,
The seeds of all blessings are given :
The stuff ’t is that glory is made of,
The price that buys heaven.” —

“ Love on earth, of the love of the heavens
Is but as a down-dropping spark,
In mercy struck out, but oft trampled
And quenched in the dark.

“ Naught as this, on our viewless wings rushing,
Half so heavenly we find, as we roam
O’er the world ; yet ’t is scarce the rude type of
The love that ’s to come.

“ Its heart has few chambers and narrow ;
And all of them, soon filled, it locks.
Then it says, ‘ I ’ve no room,’ to the homeless
Intruder that knocks.

“ The stem that its few rose-buds beareth
 With countless thorns bristles beneath.
Its garden is only the sunny
 Bright play-ground of Death.

“ Far more strong than the brother’s young manhood
 To shield his girl sister from harm, —
More glad than, with dance-tossèd ringlets,
 She clings to his arm, —

“ More true than the bridegroom’s devotion
 While the nuptial blessing is said, —
More deep than his young widow’s anguish
 Over him dead, —

“ More fond than the mother’s first kiss on
 Her first-born’s unsullied, fresh brow, —
More pure than its smile just bedewed at
 The font even now, —

“ More reverent than holy child forced to
His knees, by the joy of his heart,
On the shore when the waves bound before him,
Thanks giving apart, —

“ Is the love that we bear one another,
Through Infinity’s endless abode,
And Eternity’s measureless cycles !
More we love God ! ”

O, Mortality not for a moment
The pent hymns that burst forth could endure !
The wide shock of harmony stunned her ; —
She saw nor heard more.

At morning her form, cold and breathless,
By her terrified menials was found
By the altar laid, white as the stone dames
On tombs carved around.

PART FIFTH.

THEY bore her forth into the sunlight,
And tended with care and with pain.
She, wavering back to existence,
Sighed faintly again.

But, wan in their rude litter lying,
Nor lip nor a limb did she stir,
Till she heard a dead peasant's child crying,
And wooed it to her.

Anon were the castle gates opened

Each morn, and the strange tale was spread,
That the hungry and naked there trooping
Were clad and were fed ;

Anon, oft as noon lit her bower,

Childish curls clustered fond round her knee ;
Orphan babes on her breast smiled up into
Her face their own glee ;

Anon, ere chime of vespers, the palfrey

Of Hilda each day paced, to bear
A vision of peace through the hamlets,
With alms and with prayer.

Fevered ears still foretold her far coming ;

And straining hands unto hers clave,
As the guide's who should lead them to glory,
Unscathed, through the grave ;

While tremblers, to greet her, on features
That stiffened in Death's valley cold,
Called back their last smile ; then in heaven
Good news of her told.

Thus away flew, as if on the pinions
Of angels, full many a year.
“ Now choose thee a mate, dear our lady ;
Lone Age, it is drear ! ”

“ I know not,” she answered, bewildered,
“ If dreary or long my life's road ;
By His grace, not mine, it was hid in
A vision of God.”

PART SIXTH.

OF the roystering lord of the castle
Was left but a low earthly mound,
A spirit that stood at the judgment,
A corse in the ground.

The windows and walls all with black hung,
And the torches, made night a drear day,
And day lurid night without slumber,
While bells tolled alway.

But a page clattered up to the portals,

Demanding their ruler to see :

“ Rosalie and her knight are ta'en captive

In far Galilee.

“ I alone have escaped. I have run, sailed,

And ridden for aid, night and day ;

Pray Heaven it may come ere my master

The Saracen slay ! ”

Through the funeral ranks of the vassals

Ran a murmur of grief and of fear.

“ Full well our dead Earl, did he love them ;

Would God he were here ! ”

When, from sable couch starting, the Countess

Dashed the veil and the tears from her face :

“ I will lead you myself to the rescue,

Your *Earl*, by God's grace !

“ To arms ! Loose our chafing ships, tugging
At their tethers so long, by the strand ;
To the mart drive our herds and flocks, dotting
Yon far mountain-land,

“ And raise me a ransom right princely.
Great Giver, forbid I should hold
The lives of my friends, or my foemen,
Less dear than my gold ! ”

Strange billows and realms they swept over.

“ Whither flies your lord ? Pray you, his name ? ”
“ The Earl of Swanmere, to deliver
Sir Regnar, — his dame.”

Right glad saw they Ascalon's towers,
With their mirrored shafts, paint the clear deep ;
But the crescent grinned where the red cross used
To wave o'er the keep.

“ A herald craves audience, great Selim.
A strange lord a ransom has brought,
To buy the chained knight in the donjon,
In Galilee caught.”

“ Bid him first bring his bills and his crossbows.
With fire will I burn up the knight,
While my wives and my children his ransom
Share after the fight.

“ Untimely my troops to the Houris
His merciless falchion, so red,
Hath sent all my life long by thousands.
A curse on his head ! ”

Long and sore raged the battle. The fosses
Were struggling and wallowing with men ; —
A gory flood roaring and gushing, —
A devil-stocked pen.

With men, as with insects in August

Crawls the dike of a foul ditch, did crawl,
Running, writhing, and dropping, with death stung,
Each ladder and wall.

Flaming down from the ramparts above them,
As if upon Sodom again,
Through the smoke flew, with death and with fire,
The sulphury rain.

Through the grate of his donjon might Regnar,
Where the conflict waxed hottest, espy,
On a mighty black war-horse, the leader,
And burned to descry

His device. "Sure my kinsman was taller!"

He cried; "would he turn but his shield!
'T is his white swan the blue lake that saileth!
My pardon is sealed!"

In a joint of the armor of Hilda,
Lit a quivering arrow, anon.
She reeled, and she bled, but fell not ere
The battle was won.

The air it was smoke, and the castle
A palace of fast-rising flame,
When, to rid her true knight of his fetters,
Freed Rosalie came.

Where the foaming black charger pawed, champing
His red bit, at the door of a tent,
With thanksgivings to bless their deliverer,
Unwitting they went.

With the fond, trusting calm of a sister,
She looked up and smiled in his face,
And thus spake, by her Rosalie pillowed
Within her embrace : —

“ My coming deliverer no longer,
Kind attendants, oppose with vain strife ;
Nor leechcraft nor Fate any longer
Can slay me with life.

“ My days have been blest, but scarce blissful ;
I go to be blissful and blest.
In true hearts let me shrine my last wishes,
And sink to my rest.

“ Sir knight, for the price of thy freedom,
As thou say'st, if thou owest me aught,
Guard these captives, that forth from the ruin
My followers have brought,

“ Nor leave them till safe with their kindred.
Yon poor Moslem, said he not right ?
So his women and babes shall thy ransom
Share after the fight.

“ Then give thy hacked sword to its scabbard.

 This world slides from thee ; merciful deeds
Alone, crowns, with glory undying,
 The world that succeeds.

“ I will thee my kine, robes, and jewels,

 My Rosalie, Regnar my gold,
My seignories, castles, and manors,
 To have and to hold ;

“ I leave thee the weal of my vassals,

 From the dim midland mounts to the shore ;
To thee, Rose, my widows and orphans,
 To see me no more ; —

“ I dread, when she heareth the tidings,

 That long little Alice will weep ;
But lay her dear head on thy bosom,
 And hymn her to sleep ;

“ And when at the icicled lattice

 The shivering wind knocks, wailing loud,
Let her wear the warm kirtle I wrought her,
 While I wear my shroud.

“ In no earth my unworthy corse bury,

 That my Lord may have blessed with his tread.
In the church of St. Agnes I pray you
 To make my last bed. —

“ Your words are a foretaste of heaven ;

 Yet stay me not. Hear ye ? Above
Chanting cherubs and saints come, to crown me
 With fulness of love.”

Then there shone on her death-stricken features

 So sudden and wondrous a light,
They glanced upward, saw naught ; and her spirit
 Had taken its flight.

“What’s that? The Old South’s striking mid-
night!

Kind troubadour, reach me my cap.
Good by; and my very best thanks for
An excellent nap.”



THE PRINCESS' BATH:

OR

THE THREE MAIDS.

A SONG OF HUNGARY.

“ ‘How hath she sinned?’

‘In bartering love —

God’s love — for man’s.’ ”

THE LAY OF THE BROWN ROSARY.

“ If thou refuse the cross sent thee by an angel, the Devil will impose on thee
a heavier weight.”

BAPTISTERY.

PART FIRST.

BLACK mists climbed Csejta's castle walls.

Behind a bleak Carpathian's crest,
The day his blear and bloodshot eye
Was shutting, in the stormy west.

Loud hooted back the mountain owls
To faintly hooting owls below;
And dizzy bats with whirling flight
Did circling round the turrets go.

The mustering tempest fiercely rode,
And ranged in place each straggler cloud.
Through dark defile and rugged gorge
The hurrying winds piped shrill and loud.

The princess through her lattice looked,
And dimly saw the vacant road,
Once crowded with the bridal train,
That bore her to her lord's abode ;

When envying magnates grudged him, more
Than all his wealth, his peerless bride ;
And she in maiden bliss forgot,
One happy hour, her state and pride.

The princess to her mirror looked,
And saw where Discontent and Time
Had stolen from her matron face
The worshipped glories of its prime, —

A little lustre from her eye,
Some richness from each raven tress,
A subtle tint from cheek and brow,
And, with them, all her loveliness.

Her pale lip paler grew, and worked
With rage and fury ill repressed.
No sound escaped it; but, within
The hell of her rebellious breast,

“God, God!” she cried; “on woman’s youth
Thou dost its short-lived charms bestow,
And empire over hearts and hands,
To teach her but their worth to know,

“That, through her almost all of life,
The memory of that empire brief,
In loneliness, neglect, and scorn,
May barb with scorpion’s sting her grief.

“ Man’s work endures. The limner’s dames
For ages bloom and smile the same ;
And beauty in the chiselled stone
Is changeless as its sculptor’s fame.

“ Few winters’ frosts it needs to mar,
Few summers’ suns to scorch away,
The Eternal’s evanescent lines,
And colors, in his moulded clay.”

Then, from her window’s deep recess,
She gazed into the arrased room,—
Like shaded flowers in leafy bowers,
Where sat her maids amid the gloom.

A separate anguish stabbed her heart
At every excellence she spied ;
And what the jealous twilight hid,
Her jealous memory supplied.

And, "Of these beggar maids, who look
To me for dower and daily bread,
Not one but boasts herself more rich
In beauty's wealth than I," she said.

Amid those rustling groups of girls,
Three fairest showed, where all were fair ;
And one in any royal court
Had safely challenged all compare.

In Agatha had Nature tried
To manifest, in form and hue,
The choicest cunning of her hand, —
The very utmost she could do.

The stranger, when the wondrous thing
In all her glory on him burst,
Could scarcely trust his dazzled sight,
But, half incredulous at first,

With curious gaze scanned part by part,
Some blemish or defect to find,
Yet on the perfect whole at last
Reposed his pleased and baffled mind.

Scarce from her large and liquid eye
More clearly gleamed the rich nut-brown,
Than from the flood of glossy curls,
That rolled her peerless shoulders down;

Nor could her forehead's polished white
Her round and radiant neck eclipse,
Nor on her cheek the rose outdo
The cherries of her dewy lips ;

And none might say that cheek or mouth,
Or limb or waist, was moulded best, —
Each separate charm more charming in
Its harmony with all the rest ;

And in so just proportion did
 Its loftiness her stature hide,
Scarce seemed it lofty, till her mates,
 Approaching, dwindled at her side.

An aged couple's latest born,
 Their spoiled and lawless darling, she
Was all unsmirched of graver fault
 Than pettish, girlish levity.

Unnumbered airy freaks were hers,
 And mischiefs veiled with matchless craft;
And laughter such that, while he chid,
 Perforce her very victim laughed.

Noiseless and fleet, as o'er the waves
 The stealthy merry moonbeams glance,
Till grandsire Day their lamp puts out,
 Her light foot darted through the dance.

But in the toilette's art her skill
Transcendent chief itself approved,
And best of all, her own fair self
To deck aright she knew and loved.

And if of deep and hallowing love
Her features bore no softening trace,
Nor cast of high and muse-like thought,
Who missed it in her gorgeous face?

As Northern Lights o'er mountain snow,
That muse-like thought its gleams did pour
Upon the pale, imperial brow
Of sad and stately Leonore.

Lone Leonore, — a soldier's child,
She seemed the child of air and fire.
Of all the castle damsels, she
The best could rouse the martial lyre.

She best her country's legends knew ;
And oft her pealing voice could call
The hurrying knights, her lays to hear,
From mid-carousal in the hall.

Her mistress there, and Agatha,
Alone could boast her queenly height ;
And none excelled in majesty,
Or pliant grace, her figure slight.

Her ripply hair was black, and black
The feathery arches traced beneath,
And fringes of her burning eyes,
Whose darkness stopped the gazer's breath,

When suddenly their gaze he met,
As if before him, in the fight,
Stood Odin's daughter, bidding him
To drink Valhalla's mead that night.

Beside such darkness, naught relieved
The whiteness of her marble skin.
All else, — her smooth and polished cheek,
And nostril curved, and rounded chin,

Save but her full and haughty lip, —
White, ardent, glistening, grand, and true,
As those of Rome's most godlike god,
The Apollo that the Python slew.

Her earliest life in camps had been ;
Her earliest dreams, of war and fame.
In vain to woman's lowly perch
She strove her soaring soul to tame,—

A hero's soul, by adverse Fate
Too closely mewed in female clay.
She rarely wept, or sighed, or spake,
But pined and sang herself away.

'T was thus that chafing, beating soul
Inhabited a frame so frail,
That waned as if to disappear,
And pass away upon the gale.

Her proud, impassioned beauty cast
On fevered breast no healing spell.
But stilled and soothed the princess viewed
The holy face of Gabrielle,

From out which oval prison peeped
All graces maidenly and dear,
So modestly they almost seemed
Their jailer's mild reproof to fear.

Beside her lord, the princess looked
With favor upon her alone ;
And she alone her mistress loved,
For love she bore to every one.

Her quiet life, while round it clung
The dews of childhood freshly yet,
Was one unfaltering blessing breathed
On all whom in its paths she met.

A violet nestling 'neath the leaves,
She might be passed unnoticed o'er,
But, once discovered, cast aside
In search of gaudier flower no more.

Well spent were noblest gallant's toil,
And honeyed courtier's subtlest wile,
In winning, from her cherub mouth,
One opening rosebud of a smile ;

Or wooing, from their pearly twins,
Her mist-like parting lids to rise,
And yield one blessed glimpse of heaven
Through the blue windows of her eyes ;

Or to her temples delicate
In sending up, with sudden rush,
For refuge 'neath their golden crown
Of clustering locks, the happy blush.

Perched on her chair's carved oaken back,
A white dove sat above her head.
From floor to waist, an altar-cloth
Its glowing folds around her spread,

Like clouds by mounting angel cleft,
Unto a visioned saint disclosed
At sunset. On their finished work
Lightly her little hands reposed.

Still fixed, on her the princess gazed;
Till in the court-yard suddenly
She heard a noise of man and horse,
And cried, "What means it? Go and see."

All duteous rose ; but Eva ran,
And, ever pleased her zeal to show,
And first new tidings hear and tell,
Gasped, hurrying breathless from below :

“ The steward saith my lord doth ride,
To hunt the boar, with all his train,
And shall not soon return belike ;
They carry store of wine and grain.”

The princess started from her seat ;
“ Then sure he sups with me ! ” she cried ;
“ Ye idle minions, decked yourselves,
That care for naught on earth beside,

“ Bring forth my gems ! My mantle bring, —
My crimson lined with cygnets' down !
These loose and straying tresses bind !
Quick ! Do on me my wedding-gown ! ”

About her, to and fro, they swarmed,
Like frightened ants around their hill,
And while their anxious toil they sped,
In doing, feared to cross her will.

In haste the silver laver they
With tinkling, perfumed waters filled,
From blossoms that, in summer meads,
Themselves had gaily culled, distilled.

Fine linen that their wheels had spun,
And leaping shuttles wove, they brought,
By needles plied for many a day,
With richest, rarest tracery wrought.

Her casket's ebon lid they raised,
Inlaid with gold and ivory,
And, winking, almost deemed they robbed
The mine-dwarf's centre treasury,

As forth its diamonds they snatched,
And carbuncles, whose ruddy blaze —
Or so those simple maids believed —
Made pale their tapers' envying rays,

And emeralds, greener than the seas
From which their neighbor pearls were won,
That erst had proudly clasped the necks
Of queens, who sat on Poland's throne.

One on her waist her bodice laced ;
Two, kneeling, were her sandals tying ;
And three, her veil's long folds aright
To train, with trembling fingers trying ;

When open burst the sudden door ;
In, unannounced, Count Rudolph broke ;
And all fell back, and reverent stood,
While thus the noble couple spoke :

“ Ho, Bess ! what gallant pricketh fast,
To sup beneath my roof to-night,
That fitly thus those charms thou hast
In somewhat time-touched bravery dight ?

“ I come to take a hasty leave.
Count Franz sets forth to hunt the boar ;
And, ere the ending of the eve,
We ride two score of miles, or more.”

“ Is ’t not enough that still thou art
A truant to my bower and board,
That from the very towers must part,
Where breathes his wife, my traitorous lord ?

“ How long am I alone to pine ?
How long these briny eyes to strain,
To see once more those plumes of thine
Ride nodding o’er the dreary plain ?

“ How long am I to watch and weep,
While rock the storms my weary bed,
And deem thee lost, and only sleep
To dream I see thee stark and dead ?

“ How long must I, as oft as falls
The rattling drawbridge, letting in
Benighted riders to our halls,
Awakening at the hasty din,

“ With faint and fluttering heart rejoice,
And rush to meet thy cold embrace,
And only hear another's voice,
And only see another's face ? ”

“ Perchance a week, perchance a year.
I know not, dame ; I cannot tell.
But see thou bear'st thee seemly here,
And order'st all things wisely well.

"I hear afar the bugle sound;
My followers wait with hound and horn;
And distant is the hunting-ground;
I may not tarry here till morn.

"My courser kicks his shoes away.
Hear Jäger bay! Be satisfied.
This worse beseems a matron gray
Than in her teens a scarce-weaned bride."

With careless lip her brow he touched,
With careless eye surveyed her train;
Then waved a kiss to Agatha,
Who archly tossed it back again.

The princess marked, and held her breath,
And stood without a sign or word,
While clanked the spur adown the stair;
But, when the flying hoofs were heard,

She struck her, in the smiling face,
A stunning blow. The astonished maid
Sprang, like a stricken doe, away,
Then turned, half angered, half dismayed,

And bleeding turned. A sapphire had,
That in her ring the princess wore,
Cut in her cheek a small, deep wound,
And dyed the wearer's hand with gore.

The princess wiped and rubbed her hand,
And paused, and pored. "'T is passing strange!
Sure," murmured she, "the ensanguined spot
Doth back to virgin freshness change!"

Then through her tears laughed Agatha,
And whispered, in her bitter mood,
"Our dame would be as fair as I,
Could she but bathe in maidens' blood."

So some, at least, in after years
Declared, who stood the damsel near.
Some said 't was man's arch-enemy
That hissed beside the princess' ear.

The breathless circle shrank apart
As through it paced the haughty dame;
And, at her summons, instantly
The ready knave her steward came,

Who, framed and born ill works to do,
Best loved them when empowered to plead,
With specious show of loyalty,
His duty warrant for his deed.

He drowsed at mass. His mouth, unclean
With oath and nightly wassail, ne'er
The wafer dared, but watered still
The chalice with the priest to share.

But when the chaplain meekly preached
How rulers be ordained of God,
And they who most their bidding do
To heaven shall find the nearest road,

He roused himself, gazed awfully
Around upon the household band,
Scanned piously the vaulted roof,
And crossed himself with novice hand.

“Know'st thou,” to him his mistress said,
“A secret passage, Hugo? Say.”
With meaning glance, he bowed assent.
“Take torches, then, and lead the way.”

Descending to a corner-stair,
He searched the deeply-shadowed wall,
Where seldom might one straggling ray
From loophole or from cresset fall.

He brought a flask of oil, between
Its rugged massy blocks to pour,
And through the solid masonry
Oped noiselessly a thin stone door,

And showed, and scarcely showed, a path,
That wound the mountain's entrails through,
Whose rocky ribs, on either hand,
Were sweating out a deathly dew.

Crooked and long as that which leads
A virgin soul to hell, the way
Now belched its darkness, and anon
Glared luridly and sloped away ;

And he had fancied who had seen, —
But none could see the entering pair, —
He saw a native fiend, who led
A new deserter angel there.

Unto the castle-sepulchre,
In other days, that way was made,
To bear the dead who, slain in storm,
Or, starving, died, in slow blockade.

Its very being Csejta's lords
Still jealously concealed from all,
Or, sworn to secrecy, at need
Imparted to some trusty thrall.

Amid its crags, the groping hand
Recoiled oft from clammy snails ;
Before the foot hopped squatting toads,
And wound pale serpents' wriggling trails.

To breathe within its mouldy breath
Full hard their laboring bosoms strained ;
And often from its fellow-torch
Each torch extinct its light regained.

The steward went before. At last
He stumbled on a heap of bones ;
The tombs were reached, and reached the spot
Where dwelt alone two dreary crones.

Long lustres past, in Csejta's bowers,
Their idle early days were spent.
Long years ago, to Csejta's tombs
To house their outcast age they went ;

And o'er an emptied vault beneath, —
Their dwelling's half, — a hut they made ;
And there their worthless life they fed
With petty thefts and petty aid.

The steward slipped a bolt aside,
And knocked, and knocked with thundering din,
Till through a chink an eye was seen,
When straight they let the princess in.

With mops and mows they welcomed her,
With ill-feigned joy disguised their fear,
In trembling tones their homage croaked,
And prayed her gracious will to hear.

With wrathful mien she on them gazed,
And cried, "Declare what doom befits
The snake that, eating of my bread,
My poisoned heart-strings gnaws and eats!"

Each on the other looked ; and both,
With quivering jaws, most hastily
Chattered their curses on her foes, —
To her their changeless loyalty.

Beneath her fixed and angry eye
They fell and kissed her garment's hem,
And grovelled on the ground, until
With milder mien she gazed on them.

With milder voice she bade them rise,
And said, "I will not doubt your zeal.
On mine own hearth the viper coils,
That here my sure revenge shall feel.

"'T is Agatha, that wanton maid,
That fleers, and gibes, and mocks you, still,
Whene'er your toiling steps ye drag,
For alms, around the castle hill.

"And when my work on her is done,
No more your need for alms shall cry;
The tithe of what my bounty gives
Your craving greed shall satisfy."

She bowed her head, and murmured low;
The steward scarce could hear a sound;
But at the word, the crones once more
Were writhing on the humid ground.

They gasped, and wrung their claw-like hands,
And vainly strove to force the tears
From out their red and blinking eyes,
Unwet with kindly drop for years,

And whined their fears of Heaven and law,
And urged their helpless, nerveless age,
Till kindled on the princess' cheek
The purple flush of shame and rage.

“And would ye school me, then?” she cried;
“Obedience better fits your state!
Know, hypocritic rebels, know
That consciences are for the great.

“How dare ye bring, to cheat high Heaven,
The cinders of your offerings, burned
On altars of no sacred fires, —
Your worthless lives, consumed and spurned, —

“ And treason to your rightful dame ?

God wot, it makes a priest of me,
To see you try this threefold game
To cozen Satan, God, and me.

“ This righteousness is craven Fear,

That plays a mask. I'll scourge you back
For very shame, and teach your fear
To keep you to your chosen track.

“ 'T is Love, not Cowardice, doth ope

Heaven's treasure-house. Hell's handmaids, you,
If only for your wages' sake,
To hell at least be leal and true.

“ No more ; but mark ! A tale, yestreen,

Of witchcraft, in a hamlet near,
Was told ; and straight this Agatha
Declared the witches harbored here ;

“ For that ye never crossed her way
But, in a sennight, pins did prick,
And needles sharp, that none might find,
Her flesh unto the very quick.

“ In sooth, I half believe the charge ;
And, if she lives complaint to make,
I ’ll urge it, till ye crackling gasp
Upon the fagots round the stake.

“ If to your duty ye return,
By night the damsel, hither led,
Shall pass unnoticed as a ghost,
That flits to see the neighboring dead.

“ Unmarked as tumblings of the worms,
That batten on their flesh, the deed
In secret shall ye do, — as those,
Then snugly sleep, and richly feed.

“ The King of kings, if from his throne,
At princes of the race of man,
In idle hour he deigns to glance,
Will scarce their reptile bond-slaves scan.

“ His master is the subject's creed,
Submission is his gospel's sum.
What say ye to the homily ? ”
They nodded both, amazed and dumb.

“ Make ready, then ; and make a fire ;
And see the liquid doth not cool.
Add water, if it needful be,
To fill yon caldron well-nigh full.”

She turned ; and, from a tomb hard by,
The steward hurried at her call ;
And once again they threaded, through
The crowding rocks, the passage small ;

And presently the princess said,

“What of our conference hast heard?

I did not bid thee go.” Quoth he,

“My gracious lady, not a word.”

She paused, and then resumed: “Since first

I brought thee to this dreary hold,

From Poland's royal bowers, I still

Have found thee silent, true, and bold.

“Thy service past is amply paid.

Thy future amplier I 'll requite. —

How mayst thou timorous Agatha

Allure to yonder hut, to-night?”

He rubbed his brows, and slow replied,

“I know not yet. She loves me not.

She scarce would, of her own free will,

Approach so weird and lone a spot.

“ And she is strong, and loud can shriek
At lighter things. Now fortune send,
Your highness doth some scroll retain,
That Louis' knightly hand hath penned ! ”

“ A scroll ? A score ! ” “ An 't please your grace,
Their characters I 'll mimic so,
That from the true not Louis' self,
Save by their drift, the feigned should know.

“ A hasty love-letter I 'll write,
And woo her warmly to repair
To meet the knight at Elcine's cot,
And say a priest doth wait them there,

“ And that a trusty guide am I.
This letter to the maid I 'll bear.
The youngling, weary of the nest,
Will lightly dart into the snare.”

“ But if, when snared, she chafe and beat,
How may her keepers her restrain ? ”

“ In sugared wine, so please your grace,
A sleeping potion let her drain.”

“ And if, perchance, she tarry long ? ”

“ The letter shown will satisfy
All meddlers seeking news of her,
And silence straight their ‘ Where ? ’ and ‘ Why ? ’

“ Knight Louis to the war was boune —
She knows it not — at peep of day.
There let him die, or, home returned,
Disprove the tale as best he may.”

From out her silken purse she drew
Some pieces broad. “ It likes me well ;
I ’ll give thee all he wrote ! ” cried she, —
“ His suit to me for Gabrielle.”

PART SECOND.

WITHIN the ample arrased room
Again the castle damsels met,
Were, darkling, round the faded hearth,
In social ease and idlesse set.

The tempest roared and raved without ;
And, tapping on the window-pane,
To minstrel crickets' rhyme beat time
The ceaseless finger of the rain.

In such an hour, more freely each
To each his inmost thought imparts ;
For when each face from each is hid,
Then most we see each other's hearts.

Behind the tapestry paused the dame ;
And in the midst stood listening Fate,
That loveth, in her sport, to change
To prophecy men's careless prate.

Dropped on the ear, as brokenly
As silver chime of holy bell,
That calls good angels saints to meet,
The tender tones of Gabrielle : —

“ Ye question of the time to die ;
Almost I would that mine were come. —
Oft, when ye asked, my tears replied ;
Now will I tell you of my home.

“’T was in an ivy-mantled hall,
Shut in from all resort of men.
Beside it played a pebbly brook,
And bees hummed through a flowery glen ;

“ And round it lifted, wide and high, —
Like mothers that their babes display, —
Their laughing vineyards to the sky,
The sunny hills of green Tokay.

“ So early did our parents die,
That ne’er we knew nor missed their care.
Mine only sister Maud, and me,
Their good old servants nurtured there.

“ They held me but a drooping thing ;
She, mild and soft, was blithe and free ;
She won the love of every heart,
Then turned to share that love with me.

“ Together, on the streamlet's banks,
Our little basking forms we laid,
Together launched round acorn-cups,
And hand in hand together strayed.

“ Together still, our nurse's chair,
When drenching showers plashed through the
vale,
We climbed, and clasped her bending neck,
And sued her for her oft-told tale ;

“ And side by side, with bag and book,
We sought the neighboring convent-school,
And conned our easy tasks beneath
The saintly sisters' gentle rule ;

“ And when, released, with homeward feet
We frolicked through the turfy glade,
We reft it of its violets sweet,
And garlands for each other made.

“ On broidered fields our needles keen
So swiftly slew the guileless hours,
That half we mourned their knells to hear,
Tolled pealing from the convent towers ;

“ Or, arm in arm, from even-song
Beside the brook we lingering stood,
To see the high and solemn moon
Look down, and gild its winding flood,

“ So mindless of the tread of Time,
That, swelling dimly on the breeze,
Surprised us there the compline's notes,
Sung slowly through the muffling trees.

“ The autumn leaves ye praised to-day,
To me they seemed a gorgeous pall.
They wear the vampire's hectic hue ;
And, when in rustling heaps they fall,

“ Death’s tiny angels nestle there ;
And many now, in grove and glen,
Their soft and baleful breath inhale,
Who ne’er shall see the spring again.

“ The forest boughs — already changed
To countless hues their verdant screen —
Gray glimpses of the cloistered walls
Began to show, their leaves between ;

“ And in those still, calm, dying days,
The wild-wood paths Maud singing trod,
When birds fly fastest to the south,
And fluttering parting souls to God.

“ All through a soft and sultry noon,
She sat beneath a painted tree.
At eve she sought her fevered bed,
And moaned and tossed in misery.

“ Through long, despairing days and nights
I tended her ; until, at last,
She sank in slumber calm and deep.
The leech declared the peril past.

“ Chiding my bosom's rapturous swell,
I breathless watched her couch beside.
She woke, and could not speak to me,
But shrieked, and shrieked until she died.

“ How dreary then looked all the earth !
My spirit's sun no longer shone.
How terrified I shrank from Life,
Nor dared to face it all alone !

“ But when I looked for Death, and prayed
To find with him a safe retreat,
His hands were full of fleshly pangs,
And pointed to the judgment-seat.

“ And at the sight, I fled again,
For refuge to God's altar flew,
And only dared to ask His aid
His holy will to bear and do.

“ Still let that will my fate decide ;
But if, upon my spirit thrown,
I, by His grace, should ever bear
Some faint reflection of His Son,

“ Most were His summons welcome then
To mine eternal dwelling-place,
That never earthly shadow more
That priceless likeness might efface.

“ In memory of my Maud, I keep —
True emblem of her peace and love —
The nursling of her girlish hours,
My beautiful and snowy dove.

“ Oft when it hovers down to me,
Almost I deem 't is she doth come,
All clad in shining purity,
To greet me from her heavenly home;

“ And when, as erst by her 't was taught,
It flies, with billing, cooing beak,
Within my lips the juicy fruit,
Or golden grain, it loves, to seek,

“ I half believe, with smiles and tears,
In very doting childishness,
That Maud her wonted playful kiss
Once more upon these lips doth press.”

She ceased ; and wept her soothing mates,
And marvelled 'mid their tears, to know
That one of wont so calm and bright
Could e'er have known so bitter woe,

Caressed the dove, and promised it
Sweet offerings, for its mistress' sake,
Then to their topic turned again ;
When much enforced Lenora spake : —

“ Would that I, in my father's tent,
Had died,— his martial cloak my bed,—
As once I slumbered at his feet,
And pillowed on his shield my head ;

“ While with my glorious dreams chimed in
The noises of the glorious camp,—
At drowsy midnight wakeful still,—
The clash of arms, the charger's tramp,

“ The tread of constant sentinel,
The clatter of returning post,
And, filling every pause between,
The stirring of the countless host !

“ Would that this worthless life, for his,
I might have paid, a valiant son,
When, for his native land and me,
The fight was all too dearly won,

“ In that red vale whence, through his foam,
Fights Danube forth triumphantly,
From savage Servia's walls and chains
Escaping to the chainless sea! —

“ Why wish? For wishes powerless are,
And lowly must a maiden's be;
And less I could not than to break
Of hundred-handed Tyranny

“ Some arm, and leave to wights oppressed
A legacy of liberty,
Then yield my soul exulting up,
E'en in the hour of victory.”

“ Enough, enough ! ” cried Agatha ;

“ When will ye quit these doleful themes ?
Beshrew your tongues ! For all this night,
Ye ’ve filled my sleep with grisly dreams.

“ Let me in merry-making live, —

Nor think on Death till he is near, —
While sparkling eyes my steps pursue,
And honeyed speeches stuff mine ear.

“ But when — if e’er — the coming time

With blighted cheek and wasted vein
Doth deck me, — like our gracious dame’s,
That Spite and Envy blast and drain, —

“ That, marked of other’s gaze no more,

Are only fit mine own to fright,
The hand shall have a generous fee
Which kindly puts me out of sight.”

“Bethink thee,” pleaded Gabrielle,
“How hidden griefs wrath’s embers stir,
And that our youth must fly like hers ;
Nor, for thine own sake, anger her.”

Then came the princess in and stood,
A darker darkness, ’midst them all,
And bade them to the evening meal
Attend her, in the vaulted hall.

PART THIRD.

WITHIN the chapel dark and drear
 Knelt gentle Gabrielle anon,
While drowsed the chaplain o'er his cheer,
 To do her vesper rites alone.

With crosier, stole, and mitre, stood
 Stone abbots, nodding overhead;
And petrified around her lay
 The forms of knight and lady dead,

That ever, as her taper's flame
 Waved to and fro the flickering glooms,
Seemed fitfully to beckon her,
 With wierdly welcome, to their tombs.

Before a pictured shrine she knelt,
 Whence looked a pure and tender face,
Drawn by some reverent painter-seer, —
 The Virgin Mother's, full of grace.

They gazed into each other's eyes,
 Between them light, around them shade ;
It had been easy to mistake
 The breathing for the imaged maid.

A cherub seemed the damsel, in
 A shining oasis of peace,
Who waited on the Queen of Heaven
 Within a frowning wilderness.

She crossed herself, and as she rose
A Houri's lips, that from above
Were pressed to hers, cried suddenly,
"Now tell me, dost thou Louis love?"

"Knight Louis? Nay, I love him not,—
Dear as I love Lenore and thee.
He frights me with his wrath and oaths.
A wild and stormy mate were he ;

"And yet my very soul was wrung,
To see his anger and his pain,
As to the wars he swore to go,
And never see my face again."

"Such anger soon is cooled. Such pain
Perchance I have the power to heal;
But never, for her wedding-wreath,
Would Agatha thy heart's-ease steal."

“What say'st thou?” “Dost thou love him not?”

In very deed? Art sure? O, sweet,
Deceive me not! Too long I wait.

In very deed? The time is flect.”

“I know not, dearest, what thou say'st.

In very deed, this very even, —
E'en as thou cam'st, — Our Lady's grace
I sought, to be the bride of Heaven.

“I love him not. Aught wouldst thou more?”

“Nay, blessings on this happy day!
I love him! I have loved him long, —
Not now in vain!” “Where wouldst thou?
Stay!”

“Peruse this scroll. — To Elcine's cot.”

“My taper! — 'T is in Louis' hand! —
Now saints be praised! — A grief is loosed
That bound my heart with straitest band!

“ O fickle youth ! But yester morn
He swore to die for love of me.
God speed ye both ! Yet thus ? so soon ?
Dear coz, it scarce were maidenly ! ”

“ Tush, tell not me, my gossip sweet !
Trust me, I ween thou likest well
Thy maidenly and dainty pride
With sighs of captive swains to swell.”

She said, and bounding sprang away,
With onc gay glance and warm embrace,
And took her secret, murky way,
With Hugo, to the fated place.

Like lightning flew she 'twixt the rocks,
While he pressed after out of breath.
So lightly flies unconscious Life,
So eager still, to ambushed Death.

But at the door she shrinking paused ;
The steward threw it open wide.
Then forth came Elcine and her mate ;
But other was there none beside.

They answered to her seeking eye,
" To fetch the priest the knight hath gone.
Meantime he prays thee take some meat,
For thou hast far to go anon."

With reverence oft, and toothless smile,
They placed her at a groaning board,
(By Louis, for his bride, they said,)
With many a costly viand stored,

With silver dishes heaped with fruit
Of mellow hues, and rarest wines,
That like clear wells of rubies flashed,
Or topaz, through their crystal shrines.

She could not eat. She watched the door,
Then at her own fond tremors laughed ;
And when the sparkling mead they poured,
The sparkling mead she praised and quaffed.

She put the goblet down, and on
Her hand her head ; and straight there crept
A happy dream upon her soul,
And smilingly she sat and slept.

She slept, a proud and glorious form
As ever glowed in torches' light.
She woke within a murky den,
All faint, and weak, and ghastly white.

Beneath a caldron huge, a fire
With lurid embers dimly glowed ;
And o'er it, stirring what it held,
A tottering form like Elcine's stood.

And Annot, by her pallet bent,
Next did her staring eyeballs see ;
While in a platter, from her arm,
Dark drops dropped plashing heavily.

She, with her voiceless, gasping lips
Most vainly parted, strove to scream,
And deemed that 'neath a spell she lay,
Or in an endless nightmare dream.

She feebly writhed and strove to rise ;
But far too easily, in sooth,
Their scorned decrepitude restrained
The struggles of her powerless youth.

A moment with her useless throes
Flowed freer forth life's ebbing tide.
She smote them with a nerveless hand ;
One cry she gave, and sank, and died ;

And as she passed, the princess came,
Pale as her ghost, to drown her wrath,
And last poor hope of peace and Heaven,
Plunged with her in her crimson bath.

PART FOURTH.

KNIGHT Louis plied, o'er dale and down,
His foaming steed with ceaseless heel;
And angry Love the rider spurred,
More galling than the rowel-steel.

Each old, familiar haunt he passed,
With thoughts and hopes of Love was strown;
And by him in his wild career
As flying fast fled stock and stone,

So fled from him those hopes of youth ;
While with him still his clinging woe,
Through roaring flood and glade serene,
Fast as his nimble steed did go.

Yet deemed he that, so soon as lay
Those haunts of Memory left behind,
His bosom should, 'mid scenes unknown,
Its wonted ease and joyance find.

He left each wonted haunt behind ;
He plunged himself 'mid scenes unknown.
He felt that she was far away ;
He only found himself alone.

Nor for an instant's breathing-space
His goading rage had spent its force,
Ere ruthless Love was leagued anew
Against his peace, with keen Remorse.

He thought upon her patience sweet,
He thought upon her last farewell,
And tears, with which his words had wet
The gentle eyes of Gabrielle,

And follies, loathly in her sight,
Until he turned his bridle-rein,
Before the turbaned hosts he saw,
Resolved to see her once again,

And vow henceforth, — for her dear sake, —
If not indeed her love to win,
By noble havior and deed,
To earn her pardon for his sin.

Meanwhile the short-lived wonderment
In Csejta's halls was all gone by;
The story of the fair one's flight
Was stale as dog's-eared homily;

Though, while their prisoned hours wore on,
In wonted grand monotony,
Some, haply, envying thought on her,
'Twixt sky and mountain faring free.

His dame, next morn, had Hugo chid,
As faithless shepherd of her fold;
But Eva marked that from that day
He wore a chain of massy gold.

Yet moodier still the princess grew.
Now stealthily she laid her hand
An instant near her tiring-maid's,
And eagerly its texture scanned;

Now, as she decked her wasting locks,
With pauseless eye, the startled lass
Beheld her glancing at her face,
Then at her own, within the glass.

From tower to tower she roved around ;
And oft her voice her maidens heard,
As thus she muttered to herself ;
But rarely could they catch a word :

“ If all the priests from north and south,
And east and west, were met to tell
To me the blessedness of heaven,
And all the maddening pangs of hell,

“ With clasped hands, I 'd cry, Amen !
Yet still what I am now should be ;
For heaven it was in Rudolph's smile,
'T is hell his bitter scorn to see.

“ I know not if his eye be clear
As that which charmed my heart away, —
His voice, as that that 'neath my bower
Erst pealed in nightly roundelay.

“ This only change I ’m skilled to mark,
Though I should scan him o’er and o’er :
His look is mild ; — he loves me still ?
’T is sullen ; — nay, he loves no more.”

From window, and from window, still
She gazed in vain ; but lo, at last,
She saw afar a man and horse,
And heard a merry bugle-blast !

“ Thy tidings ! ” “ Noble dame, thy lord,
In weal and health, did bid me come,
That straightway should the beeves be killed ;
His Christmas feast he eats at home.”

While all was tumult, at her call
Came Hugo, with his face of joy.
“ Tell Elcine that to-night,” she said,
“ Will I once more her cares employ.

“ It needs no craft as erst. The girl
Hath scarcely strength to bear her weight.
I will but bid her meet me there,
Upon me in a bath to wait.”

He left her ; and she muttered on :

“ No more, when Leonore is gone,
Shall I among my damsels see
A port as lofty as mine own.”

The twilight fell ; and Leonore,
With fingers pushed 'twixt wire and wire,
And clinging arms, and drooping head,
Sat resting on her silent lyre.

And Gabrielle, who, ill at ease,
From post aloof had watched her long,
Approached her with a timid foot,
And prayed her sing her sweetest song.

“ I cannot. Shapes of blood and death
Press, thronging, on my brain to-night ;
Not, as of old, with awful joy
They fill me, but with strange affright.”

“ O, thou art ill ! I guessed too well,
Before I heard thy hollow speech.
Thy brow is burning ! Send to seek
A soothing draught, — a learned leech.”

“ My leech is on his way. 'T is one
That cools the brow, and stops the breath,
And soothes the weary frame to rest,
The churchyard's quiet dust beneath.”

“ Alas ! But seek thy spirit's health,
And cleanly make thy shrift, at least,
And hear the blessed words of peace —
'T will ease thee — from the holy priest.

"My sins he pardoned all, this morn."

"Nay," quoth proud Leonore, "but he
Who bids Christ's freedmen bow their necks
To bondage, is no priest for me."

"Lenore," the princess called. She rose,
And straight had fallen, but for the aid
Of Gabrielle, yet tottered back
In mantle and in coif arrayed.

"Where wouldst thou?" "Unto Elcine's cot;
Our dame would have me wait her there.
The way is short; my breast may be
The freer for the freshening air."

"O no! 'T is chill! Be ruled by me,
And steal unnoticed to thy bed.
The princess shall be soon appeased,
When she doth find me in thy stead.

“ Give me thy mantle. Message aught
Have I to say ? ” “ The princess' bath
Must they prepare. I know not why ;
It is some fancy that she hath.”

“ Sleep soft ; I come to nurse thee soon.”
“ I 'll seek my solace in the line —
In my own tongue — by saints of yore
Traced for us all in Palestine.

“ 'T is in my father's well-worn tome.
I'll pray his prayer ; but ere I rest
I'll sue that one sweet saint of Rome
With countless blessings may be blest.”

Then Gabrielle her lonely way
Went circling round the castle hill.
Its snow-drift pavement crumbled not.
The night was starry, clear, and still.

She moved entranced in tender thought,
And gazed into the near, pure sky,
As if within its dome to seek
The spirits of the blest on high.

She reached the hut, and tried the latch.
It rose, and fell; the door was locked.
The inmates oped; and to the room
Beneath, with fire and pallet stocked,

With mops and mows, they ushered her,
Then suddenly made fast the door,
And dragged her towards the caldron straight
That stood the kindling fagots o'er,

And grasped their knives. Then faint she sank
Between them breathless on the floor,
And wept aloud, and shrieked for aid,
And prayed for mercy o'er and o'er,

And strove to wring her snowy hands,
And cried the princess loved her dear.
They shook their heads, and o'er her stooped ;
Then rose she o'er her frenzied fear,

And stilled her cries, and choked her sobs,
And promised to be calm and still,
If only she her prayers might say,
And let them do their utmost will.

Cried Elcine, " We may do it here,
As well as there. She's still at last.
Quick, limping Sloth ! yon platter bring.
The dame will come ! I'll hold her fast."

" Why, let her pray a moment's space,
And please her. Still so curst art thou !
'T will save us time, and breath, and pains ;
This cough, it chokes me even now ! "

Thus while they wrangled, hurriedly
The victim struggled to her knees,
First clasped her hands in wordless woe,
Then panted broken words like these :

“ O Father ! O redeeming Son !
O Virgin Mother ! see and save
Thine erring, helpless, wretched child,
That kneels beside a yawning grave.

“ I cannot die a murdered death !
I dare not die by bloody hands !
O, pardon, Lord, this faithless heart,
That murmurs at thy high commands !

“ While through the shadowy vale I walk,
Be with me ; and I need not fear.
Be with me in mine agony ;
For I am safe where Thou art near.

" I knew not that, in all the earth,
There breathed my wilful enemy;
Yet pray Thy mercy on his soul,
If Thou, all-seeing, such dost see.

" My mistress keep, and Leonore,
And for these poor and hapless two,
Forgive their crazed, unfriended age.
Forgive; they know not what they do.

" Though darkly frown the gates of death,
And grim the portresses be,
I know, for Christ's dear sake, they shall
Prove opening gates of heaven to me."

They stooped to seize her then once more.
She rose, and followed where they bade,
And meekly on the bed of death
Her unresisting beauty laid.

On either side they stood to find,
With peering eye, and finger slow,
The vein — like sky-reflecting stream —
That wandered through a field of snow.

She watched with them each trembling arm,
And while her eyes with tears were dim,
As theirs with age, raised tremblingly,
In faint sweet notes, her convent hymn.

“Do thou the deed ; for thou art deaf.
She strives not,” — then did Annot say,
Threw down her knife, and stopped her ears,
And turned her back, and crouched away.

As faster flowed her blood, her tears
Were dried. Around her golden head,
And paling face, the fire unblest
A seeming saintly halo shed.

The dove, that had been scared away,
Flew down to her. She upward cast
A smiling gaze, that met its flight,
And whispered, "Maud," and breathed her last.

PART FIFTH.

THE morning, unto burdened heart
That ever is the heaviest hour,
Broke on the eyes of Leonore,
And woke her in her turret bower.

Those listless eyes grew fixed and wide.
Where Gabrielle was wont to rest,
Her couch stood smooth as yester eve;
Nor e'en the pillow had been pressed.

With speed had she her raiment donned,
When Eva to the threshold came,
And cried, "What, ho! thou slug-a-bed,
Come Gabrielle, and dress our dame!

"Why, where is Gabrielle?" she cried;
"Help! mercy! — Here is Leonore!
Nay, see yourselves. Her ghost is there!
'T is sliding through her chamber-door!"

The dame was in a frenzy-fit,
Before she half her tale could tell.
"Say'st thou thou saw'st Lenore?" she cried;
"O, where is slaughtered Gabrielle?

"As from my bath I came, last night,
A ghostly hand, it clutched my train.
I wist not whose, and tore it thence —
You see 't is torn — with might and main."

As Leonore stole down the stair,
A mouldy wind blew in her face ;
A seam yawned through the gaping wall
Into a new and twilight place.

A remnant of the princess' robe
Parted the chink, and beating strove
Within it, fluttering to be free,
With blood-stained plumes, the milk-white dove.

The stony gate, on silent hinge,
Turned at her touch. The bird had fled.
She went, by its unerring wing
Along the darkling pathway led.

Now flashed it through a sunbeam stray,
Then through the darkness flapped, until
It in a shimmering cranny perched,
And panting rested, fixed and still.

She hid it in her breast ; and through
The cranny smothered voices came.
She peeped within. Two prating crones
Toiled round a torch's lurid flame :

“ This time do thou the caldron cleanse ;
I sicken with its gory smell.
Our dame, to make her body fair,
Doth dye her soul with hues of hell.

“ This was not like yon Agatha,
That wriggled, smote, and screamed so loud.
Beshrew me, of our best new gear,
But she shall have a dainty shroud.”

Thus while they spake, and moved about,
The interrupted torchlight fell,
One moment, on a marble face,
The dead, sweet face of Gabrielle.

The dame, meantime, with calmér mien,
Said to her damsels, " Gabrielle
Last night unto her convent went;
She prayed me greet you all right well.

" A safe, unlooked-for convoy then
Was offered ; but it could not wait.
If Hugo said Lenore was dead,
He mocked you but with idle prate.

" If she had died, no need had been
To send her hence the selfsame night.
She, when she dies, shall buried be
The chapel 'neath, with fitting rite.

" I wildly talked, perchance, myself ;
My brain was turned with Eva's din.
No more !" Anon, on some pretence,
Strove each her safe discharge to win.

One, sickening, would be nursed at home,
And one would see a sister wed,
And one must straight repair to tend
Some new-found grandsire's dying bed.

Half pleadingly to them she stared,
Most like a wild-cat, when her young
Are stolen, mewling round the place
With drooping head and burning tongue.

To this she gave a necklace fair,
A bracelet or a ring to that.
The goodly gifts forgotten lay;
But still the steward kept the gate.

A priest she summoned, when he came
Dismissed, but bade high mass be said,
"For one whom she had dearly loved,
But who had very long been dead."

And often, through the haggard hours,
She shuddered at an awful note,
That downward from the chapel seemed,
As from the trump of doom, to float.

'T was from the long-mute voice and lyre
Of Leonore. She, all that day,
Sat singing dirges on the spot
Where Gabrielle was wont to pray ;

But when the twilight closed, she stood
At Agnes' side ; and, bursting forth
At tempest's close, as siegèd sun
From west to east, and south and north,

Shoots golden shafts through every rift,
And fires the cloudy-tented skies,
E'en so her long-pent life glowed out
At kindling cheeks, and lips, and eyes.

“To-night do I descend the cliff;
Avenged shall be sweet Gabrielle.
Commend me to thy fellow-maids;
To them and thee a last farewell!

“And if my life was little joy,
Perchance, to either them or thee,
Remember sometimes, if my death
Pays ransom for your liberty.”

At midnight, when the household all
Or seemed, or were, in slumber deep,
She oped a lattice, that looked out
Upon a giddy, headlong steep.

She softly kissed and freed the dove
That in her breast since morn had been;
It sprang aloft on bounding wing,
And never more on earth was seen.

With fingers cramped, and chamois foot,
She ran where never fellest foe,
With scaling-ladder, hook, and rope,
In heat of storm, had dared to go.

Deeps yawned through deeps ; no rest was there,
Till rushing, reeling to and fro,
Midway she gained the jagged crags
That beetled o'er the plain below.

“ Ho, pretty maiden ! part'st thou thus
From Csejta's hospitality ? ”
Cried Hugo ; and a rattling noose
Struck on the peak she stayed her by.

She leapt, and like a night-bird flew
O'er many a leaping, flying rock,
Till headlong on the plain below
He heard her smite, with muffled shock.

The white stars shone on field and fell
All silvered with the shining frost ;
The slow moon burned her flickering way
Through ice-glazed branches glued and crossed.

'T was not unlike the soul of man, —
The frozen, breathless, midnight air, —
When hope and fear, together fled,
Have left it to a still despair.

So cold on Louis' fevered ear
The deathly, wierdly silence fell,
That wildly, as he rode along,
He whooped, and shouted, " Gabrielle ! "

Loud clattering o'er the glassy ford
The charger dashed, with hoof unwet.
The charger's coat was reeking dark,
The rider's forehead smoked with sweat.

And Csejta's rising towers drew near ;
He knew their growing outlines well ;
But none the nearer seemed the sky,
And none the nearer Gabrielle.

The silence cold took shape and voice,
And, swaying, reared itself amain,
And faced him, clinging, as he bent,
Unto his bolting courser's rein,

And fixed upon his starting eyes
The sunken eyes of Leonore :
" The princess doth her damsels slay,
To bathe her body in their gore ;

" In Elcine's cot, seek GABRIELLE."

She fell, nor other word spake she,
But died, — it was her girlish prayer, —
E'en in her hard-won victory.

The door he burst, and Elcine shook
And Annot, till their clattering jaws
Were void of falsehoods. When he ceased,
They pointed with their bird-like claws

Into a murky vault beneath,
And quavered of their lady's will.
With folded hands upon her breast,
His shrouded love lay white and still.

He lifted her and bore her out, —
A hard and crushing weight for him, —
For, trembling, when he felt it first,
He quaked in every sturdy limb.

He gently rode, until he reached
A convent, and the porter-friar —
In tones of one who bears a babe
That slumbers — bade to call the prior.

The good old man, arising straight,
Slow-footed ne'er to bring relief,
Received, in mild paternal arms,
The marble image of his grief.

He prayed him let the bells be tolled,
And masses said, and carved above
Her snow-white tomb, in fairest guise,
The figure of a snow-white dove,

And promised him, to pay his pains,
His goods and cowlèd self anon,
So soon as to the Palatine
His errand should be fitly done.

“What knights are those? Admit them not!”

“What ails this shrewish wife of mine?

Admit them straight. From Presburg's towers,
Thrice hail, now princely Palatine!”

The princess stood at Rudolph's back,
With sparkling eyes, and bristling hair,
As stands the lioness at bay,
Surprised by hunters in her lair.

Her hands upon his ears she clapped ; —
Before they spake, their tidings had
Her senses stunned ; — but Rudolph heard,
And spurned her, and she straight went mad.

Within the hut the hags they seized ;
And near it, searching closely round,
The mouldered corse of Agatha,
Half-hid with earth and leaves, they found,

And bore it forth ; and near they found, —
Their white heat spent, — and slowly bore
To rest in sacred dust at last,
The ashes white of Leonore.

Still Hugo had not fled, but moved
Unblushing 'mid the soldier bands ;
For when his servants' work is done,
Oft Satan ties his servants' hands

And feet, and blinds their sight, and takes
Their craft away. His guilt was bared.
They seized him. For the menial three
A funeral pile was straight prepared.

Through fire and smoke their screaming souls
Flew from the charred and blackening stake,
Unto the blue, undying flame
That sails along the sulphur lake.

To justice, too, their dame was brought,—
The hoodwinked justice throned on earth,—
That spared her hideous life to touch,
In reverence to her lofty birth ;

But doomed her, till high Heaven's decree
Should summon her her servants' lot
To share, to wear that life away,
A prisoner, chained in Elcine's cot.

There long she shrieked, and plunged, and gasped,
And weltered in a visioned flood,
A caldron, o'er fiend-tended fire,
Of youthful maiden's boiling blood.

Black mists climb Csejta's ruined walls.
Behind a bleak Carpathian's crest
The day his weary, sickening eye
Is shutting, in the stormy west.

The mountain owls hoot hoarsely back,
To faintly hooting owls below ;
And dizzy bats, with whirling flight,
Around the vacant turrets go.

MISCELLANEOUS.

LIGHT AND DARKNESS.

TEN years ago, dear Bessy Bell
Stood with me by this mossy well.
The sun was set. I scarce could trace
The beauties of her changeful face ;
While clumsy I her pitcher filled,
And twice or thrice the water spilled.
She stood a moment, and no more ;
A smile, a glance, and all was o'er.
Her pitcher full, she would not stay,
But sprang with fawn-like foot away,
And left within my heart a light,
That gilded all that summer night.

A darkling wild before me lay ;
But boldly thence I groped my way.
If pitfalls, or if snakes, were there,
I did not know, I did not care.
Well knew I, by their rich perfume,
That clover nestled in the gloom,
And from each little censer-cup
Wild roses swung their sweetness up,
And elders spread their flowery arms,
To ward me off from watery harms ;
And, where the gurgling brooklet streamed,
The cricket's ringing chiming seemed
The very shadow of a noise,
Or dreaming Silence' talking voice,
And filled me with a tender joy.
I was a glad and fearless boy.

Yet in my bliss, I chafed to wait
The slow uplighting of my fate.

The shades of night I scarcely chid, —
Rebelled at those the future hid.
Thick as the breathing flowers unseen,
Fair prizes — scarce a blank between —
My feet encompassed, I was sure,
For me and for my love in store ; —
Was sure, for as the scents from those,
The springing hopes from these arose ;
But how I longed to see each prize
Dance mirrored in her love-proud eyes !
For honors, wealth, and fame should be
Won more for Bessy than for me.

How soon my fortune's dawn was red !
How soon the hated shades were fled !
How quickly, on life's checkered ground,
Wealth, fame, and honors have I found !
If serpents stung, I hid my pain,
And flung them strangled off again ;

And if their fangs were in my soul,
I still strode forward to the goal.
How soon I've wrung from crooked Fate,
The slave of those that strive and wait,
For boyhood's gay obscurity
A glare of void prosperity,
And for that balmy night of June
Bright horror of a winter's noon.

Once more, in manhood's flush and pride,
I stand the gray old well beside.
The shades are fled; and, white and still,
I see the meadow and the rill,
Each leaf which, by the north-wind tossed,
Nods, sparkling with its gems of frost,
And shining snow, that sighing sifts
Through withered stalks that fringe the drifts.
No more I need to grope my way, —
It lies before me plain as day,

Across a wide and wintry wold,
Where all is brilliant, clear, and cold, —
Yet pause to view with watery eyes
The dazzling mound where Bessy lies.

In darkness lurketh hope ; but light
Oft stares us into blank affright.
It shines in empty mockery,
To gild and flout our misery.

As, when his griefs have touched his brain,
The doting exile sues in vain
To tread the pale and bubbly wake,
That through the waves the ship doth make, —
White ghost of a returning road,
To lead him to his lost abode, —
We yearn to walk on Memory's track.
Time will not give his bargains back,
But, for the dross we craved of old,
Extorts and keeps life's brightest gold.

How many years of *now* I'd give,
One little week of *then* to live !
My powers matured, approved, and skilled,
For youth's vague promise ne'er fulfilled ;
And all the bays my brows that twine,
For Bessy's little hand in mine, —
Ay, all my lands, a nook to have
Beside her in her early grave.

Yet he is weak, or short, of sight,
Who cannot bear the wholesome light,
Nor by its aid, unblenching, brook
In Fate's unveiled stern face to look,
Beholding in its circuit fair
No revelation but despair.
Unto the far-eyed sailor's view
The wreck it gives, — the haven, too.
I raise my eyes. From heaven's blue dome
It shines, — from Bessy's waiting home, —

A beacon sure, to guide my way
Up to no cold nor dreary day.
The winter reaches not the sky;
But in its sunny purity
The tender gaze I see once more,
Methinks, that warmed my heart of yore.

The laurels that for thee I won,
My reckless grief doth trample on;
But lure me with thine image fair
Until with thee the palm I bear;—
Until another night shall close
Upon my triumphs and my woes,
And lay me by thy quiet side,
Thou buried Joy, my hope's young bride! —
Until again the shadows flee,
Belovèd! and I gaze on thee.

BEATI QUI LUGENT:

OR, HERMAN'S VIGILS.

A SONG OF THE NIGHT.

"Yet the Lord will command his loving-kindness in the day-time, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life." — *Psalm xlii. 8.*

"L'on y apprend qu'une affliction bien endurée est un trésor pour l'éternité, et que souffrir avec Jesus Christ doit être l'ambition d'une âme qui veut s'approcher de sa glorieuse conformité." — SCUPOLI.

THOU, who didst cheer with melodies of heaven
Israel's crowned shepherd in his vigils long,
To the long midnight of my woe hast given
At last a faint, low song.

While Rest and Childhood press their quiet pillows,
By Thy dear presence' pitying pleadings won
From hoarse-grown silence, I from wind-swung
 willows

Take my unstrung harp down.

Too faint to climb, no more with burning hands
I strain for gadding bays its frame to deck,
But, kneeling, where the cross forsaken stands
The ensanguined flowers I seek, —

Sad passion-flowers, pansies dark and sweet,
And love-lies-bleeding, drowned in heaven-wept
dew,
And herb of grace, for broken spirit meet,
The Serpent-baffling rue.

As the pleased mother marks, an unmarked warden,
Her children's merry sports from window high,
But, if or fright or pain invade her garden,
Doth breathless to them fly, —

Clasp them with kisses in her felt embraces,
And with her unexpected voice them cheer,
And look into their upturned crying faces,
That straight begin to clear;—

So Thou, who, o'er our mazy life presiding,
An ever-tender mindful watch dost keep
O'er all our joys, those thoughtless joys providing,
Art nearest when we weep.

O that to all this world of grieving mortals
I of the solace could one tithe impart,
With which Thou knockest at the unlatched portals
Of my void, desolate heart!

With tears 'Thou deign'st to purge my dust-dimmed
vision,
So of the ends of fleeting earthly woe,
In the high councils of Thy state Elysian,
Some little me to show.

Much, much Thy mercy takes, that Thou mayst give
Gifts which Thy wisdom sees worth all besides.
Our life decays to teach our souls to live
Where deathless life abides.

Thou for our heavenly thwart'st our earthly ends;
For the true riches chang'st our sordid pelf;
And callest up to Thee our human friends,
To substitute Thyself.

Thou, firm yet kindly Nurse, dost put away
The fading, poisonous laurels; then, to calm
Our idle rage, our blessed loss dost pay
With fair immortal palm.

Art's brightest pages into blackness turn
In the grim noontide of our darkened eyes,
But that from Thine own lessons we may learn
The lore that angels prize.

E'en though Thou suffered those to smite us sore
Whom erst Thou didst ordain to soothe and bless,
'T were through their wounds the oil and wine to
 pour
 Of mightier tenderness.

Borne on a bed of soft, inglorious roses
Thou wouldst not, Father, that Thy child should be,
To those calm halls where, lapped in peace, reposes
 Christ's host from victory.

From heaven's steep ramparts when some watchman
 bright
Shows the dim sunken point that gave him birth,
Through deeps of surging suns and tossing light,
 The recollected earth, —

Looks through the woes did cloud its tiny ball,
Smiles at the phantasms that befooled him then,
Straining a spirit's memory to recall
 How once he walked with men,

And modest of the mighty wars will tell,
In its clay cradle's infancy and age,
Strangling the writhing, snaky brood of Hell,
His infant soul did wage,

And boasts with grateful pride the arm that gave
Its aid in every peril that befell, —
Thou wouldst not that one craven child should have
No answering tale to tell.

For crowns of thorns, that gall Thy saints below,
Are crowns of glory worn by saints above;
The hand that weaves one for my shrinking brow
Is weaving it in love.

For the last time, perchance, 't is profferéd;
O bear with me, and I will now endure,
Lest 'mid Thy shining ones I hang my head,
Undiademed, obscure!

Thou bidst me to the table where, on waters
Of bitterness and sorrow's hardest bread,
Earth's noblest sons, and purest, holiest daughters,
 Their growing souls have fed.

In the heart's upper, large, hushed chamber sitting,
Their working brows by angels' pinions fanned,
By high Thoughts waited on with service fitting,
 I see the awful band.

The bloodlike beads of sweat big on his forehead,
Lo! at their head, most sad, most blest, sits he
Who knelt, upon the night of nights most horrid,
 In dank Gethsemane.

To share the Passover of agony,
As lay of yore the loved Apostle John,
In his own heaving bosom bids me lie
 My Saviour and Thy Son.

And "If Thou mayst not pass from me this cup,"—
So round the board the half-choked pledge doth
run, —

"O Father, to its dregs I drink it up ;
Thy will, not mine, be done ! "

It is enough ! With them and Thee in union,
Though all my days be spent in travail sore, .
Make me but worthy of this dread communion,
And I will ask no more.

Make me but worthy, Lord, lest I, as they
Who in despair and wrath their spirits sink,
Tasting this cup and bread unworthily,
Damnation eat and drink.

Drawn nearer Thee, not chased, in each affliction
O let me own, with faith that cannot rove,
A Father's earnest hand in benediction,
Heavy with weight of love !

No more I yield to doubtings or dejections,
But meekly offer up to God and man
A pierced heart's blood and crucified affections,
The little all I can ;

And when, as sudden glooms and darkness dun
Sweep from my life's short road the flying light,
Spreads her grim veil to shroud me from the sun
The frowning, awful Night,

I will not shudder at its black expansion,
But, darkling led by Thee, will trusting say,
Some rising turret of my heavenly mansion
Doth shadow o'er my way.

My soul is strengthened. He who ever liveth
To those who at His midnight footstool weep,
Shall give unto me, even as "He giveth
To his belovéd, sleep" ;

And, as the priceless boon in peace I take,
Beneath Thy brooding wings my bed shall be;
And I will lay me down, sure "when I wake"
Of being "still with Thee."

SONNET.

THE STATUES OF DAY AND NIGHT, BY MICHAEL ANGELO.

DEAD Florence' deathless son, grand Angelo!
 How one wide thought of all o'er-shadowing gloom
 Can fix both Day and Night upon a tomb,
 Whose dust by both is mourned for, — taught by
 Woe

Thou teachest us! — when the too early light
 Bursts in, with gairish mockery of distress,
 Upon the sickened soul, and worn-out Night
 May bring faint dreams, but not forgetfulness.
 A patriot thought thou 'st petrified, to peer
 Darkling through thy translucent stone, for aye:
 So sad the Night, so looketh blank and blear
 The lusty, busy face of dazzling Day,
 When a land's life, enshrined in mortal clay,
 With one man's breath hath passed from earth away.

A VALENTINE.

OLD Winter, wedding Spring, doth brush
The powder from his curls,
And on the mountain pine's high head
Sets coronals of pearls ;

And little twittering, shivering birds,
Betrothèd by the Fates,
From icy stone and hawthorn spray
Chirp courage to their mates ;

And now, while many a painted scroll
Is flying through the town,
And, stuffed with false and heartless oaths,
To many a heart goes down,

Fair Mary, to an honest lay
Thy favoring ear incline,
And hear, amid the lying throng,
One loyal Valentine.

No slave deserves a love like thine,—
Not slavishly I 'll sue;
But if I woo thee tenderly,
I 'll woo thee proudly too.

Not e'en within my lady's bower,
A carpet-knight, I 'll wait.
I think it much to bid her be
My manhood's equal mate, —

To bid thee forth to chase with me,
 Wrapped in my mantle warm,
The wild and fierce delight that lives
 In conflict and in storm.

Nor say I that, with hope of thee,
 Mine every hope were o'er,
Nor that, rejected, I may be
 As I have been no more.

Still soars the mount, though 'mid his crags
 No eagle builds her nest;
Still Ocean floweth, though no moon
 Doth cheer his gloomy breast.

Nor say I that long loneliness
 May bend thy spirit's pride,
And turn it from its upward spring
 To grovelling ways aside.

Still, of her sunward nature borne,
The eagle cleaves the sky,
Though, gasping, on earth's dusty plain
To drop anon, and die.

Still shines the moon, though, drear and lone,
Thick clouds her beauty hide,
With useless beams, while all below
In groping dark abide:

But if upon her deep she smiles
For scarce an instant's space,
What golden gladness flashes o'er
His troubled, mighty face!

With myriads, how, of springing smiles,
Its furrows all are sown,
His every glance reflecting back
The brightness of her own!

How, darting from its darkness forth,
His countless ships are seen,
On blessed errands to and fro,
His waiting shores between,

White shuttles that his tossing arms
With tireless motion ply,
To weave the nations' heart-strings in
The web of unity !

And if, when flags the eagle's wing,
Aloft in middle air
Her trysting mountain lifts his brow,
In haste to meet her there,

Within his giant arms to rest,
Searce stooping from her height,
How soon, with pinions plumed anew,
She wings her loftier flight !

O peerless woman! let thine eyes,
At Truth's own altar lit,
Be lamps to light me up with thee
On glory's Alp to sit.

A light-house, thee I 'll guard and rear,
Till all mankind shall be
Illumined by thy holy rays,
That emanate through me.

A CHARADE.



MY first, when lilac-tressèd May,
 Of old, led in *Election Day*,
 Best burden of the tasteful tongue,
 How baked the old! How munched the young!
 How from its caves, with mining thumbs,
 Exultant Horners forced the plums!
 Its short-lived glories passed away,
 Election comes no more with May.
 My readers may perchance forget.
 To make the matter clearer yet,
 Queen Anne, if ancient rhymes be true, —
 So fair! — was of its rich, deep hue.

Now let my Protean next appear
The ruby crown of Chanticleer;
In tugging nursemaid's hands, the rife
And rueful source of nursery strife;
And castle where his plunder stores
The honeyed robber of the flowers.

My whole, where rice-fields basking lie,
And listless Ethiops drudge and die,
Was once an unobtrusive town;
But now, by wondrous change, has grown
The Deity whose breath inspires
Our demagogues' transcendent fires,
Who, thundering in their own sweet praise,
Invoke the men of future days,
While, writhing in his helpless pain,
The speechless Speaker pounds in vain,
And States behold their wrongs grown hoary,
Ere *long-bowed* heroes end their story,
(That, now-a-days, for wages small
Might hire one bard to sing them all,)

Yet still their yearly million strain,
Nor aught, save noise and nonsense, gain.
When your poor purse as empty waxes,
As are such utterances, with taxes,
And sold are half your fair possessions
To pay your part towards long Long-Sessions,
Your woe-enlightened mind, no doubt,
Will but too quickly find me out.

M A N H O O D.

A MIRACLE attends the morn !
Creation new, a child is born !
Be veiled the light, and hushed each sound ;
Let hallowed stillness reign around ;
While to a mother's eye appears
A smiling throng of rosy years.
Among them flitting shadows go,
With cypress wands, in weeds of woe.
But far, and dimly, hovering,
They flit, all thin and wavering,

Forbid to her their forms to show,
The heavenliest hour that earth can know,
That gives, in soft endearing charms,
The first-born to her raptured arms.
Or far, or near, in mazy dance,
The linked sisters fair advance;
With honors crowned, wealth, fame, and joy,
They beckon on the unconscious boy.
Thank God for life!

The feather-footed years run by.
The babe has oped his wandering eye
From dreams that waiting angels strew
Around him, soft as Hermon's dew,
To scarce less bright reality,
To virgin Eden's gayety.
All pure and fair around, above,
His little heart is fed with love;
And love his faltering footsteps stays,
His sunshine gilds with clearer rays,

His hopes inspires, and soothes his fears,
And gently dries his April tears,
For graces sought, or wrong forgiven,
Shows his young prayers their way to heaven,
And, ere the final word is flown,
Has brought an answering blessing down.
O'er velvet mead, by purling rill,
On mossy bank, he sports at will;
And balmy air, and streamlet's song,
The accents of his guileless tongue,
And flowers his dimpled limbs that press,
All breathe of early happiness.

Thank God for life !

No more in swaddling-bands confined,
How from its cradle leaps the mind !
The viewless might of air to wield,
Bid the swollen clouds their lightnings yield,
Or from the surest holds of earth
To wring Time's rocky records forth,

Or from their lurking-places high
Hunt starting systems through the sky,
In haste the universe to explore ;
While still its cry is, More ! and More !
It raises, with a magic tome,
The demigods of Greece and Rome,
Till Servius' legions shake the plain,
And Homer's harp resounds again,
And, oftener, in communion sweet,
Sits on the Mount at Jesus' feet.
The longest day is all too brief
To bring the stripling's thirst relief ;
By night, the good and great of old
In dreams to him their arms unfold ;
The morning wakes to pleasing toil,
Cheered by the glad parental smile ;
And generous friendship weaves the crown
That generous rivalry has won.

Thank God for life !

Still dance the years. Perfecting time
Has borne him on to early prime,
And paid, in golden hoard amassed,
The earnings of the thrifty past.
Each blessed earthly joy he knows ;
The gleaming laurel wreathes his brows ;
In wisdom, as in courage, great,
He firmly sways the helm of state ;
While Virtue in his silver tone
Commands, with graces all his own,
Scarce less than his, his hearers feel
Their fervors for the common weal ;
And, meek in beauty, by his side
A stately maiden blooms, a bride.
Thank God for life !

The sky is dark. The winds are loud.
Forsaken of the fickle crowd,
When every earthly hope has fled,
When friendship, youth, and joy are dead,

Undaunted in the midnight hour,
Thank God for life, for steadfast power
To live, and do, and suffer on,
For God, and for mankind alone ;
And, ended all its toil and strife,
Its work well done, thank God for life !
That leads to Death, —

The porter who at heaven's gate stands, —
Who lays on him his hallowing hands,
And, doffed his worn-out fleshly weeds,
For wedding-garments glistering, speeds.
The many mansions greet his eyes ;
His ears, the music of the skies.
The shouting blessed, in loud acclaim,
Unite to swell his long-loved name.
High soars the sweetly lessening tone,
High as the everlasting throne ;
And, trembling half with tender fears,
The Father's voice he ravished hears :

“ Now, to thy Lord’s rejoicing come,
Thou trusty servant, welcome home!”
Then, never changed, and never ending,
To loftier glories still ascending,
Thank God for life!

NOTES.

NOTES.

Page 3. *PRELUDE.*

This conversation is supposed to have taken place on the evening of the 26th of January, 1855, succeeding that of the third Assembly at Union Hall.

Page 42. *And the Son of Man, &c.*

This paraphrase of verses in the parable beginning at the thirty-first verse of the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew is inserted, not as technically correct, but as in accordance with the mode of interpretation, half mystical and half literal, which prevailed in the Middle Ages.

Page 43. *It ceased. From a garland of seraphs.*

“Così di quelle sempiterno rose
Volgeansi circa noi le due ghirlande.”

Del Paradiso, Canto XII.

Page 51. *By His grace, not mine, &c.*

“For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.”—
Epistle to the Colossians, ch. iii. ver. 4.

Page 53. *Your Earl, by God's grace.*

"*Moriamur pro rege nostro, Maria Theresa.*"

Page 63. THE PRINCESS' BATH.

Some apology is due to that discriminating class, — hitherto even more remarkable for their discrimination than for their numbers, — my readers, for intruding upon them so tediously grisly a narrative. — It may be some satisfaction to them to know that it nearly frightened me out of my own wits in the making up. The story, in its prose form, as given below, was told me by a friend who has since won for herself no unenviable rank among the educational writers of this country. It immediately occurred to me, in an enterprising mood, that it might be woven into a little poem; and in this mood the very difficulty of humanizing the monstrous character of the princess was not without its temptations. But who, on entering a poetical mine, can tell when he shall come to daylight again? To my consternation, I found the lines of my intended ballad stretching out as if to the crack of doom. In disgust I threw it aside for a year or two; but it had gone too far to be got rid of so easily, and lay upon my literary conscience like an incubus. Summoning up something of the energy of despair, I took it out again, and forced myself to finish it; but it lay for months once more before I could find resolution to correct and copy it, which I did at last with shuddering reluctance, and only at the instances of my intellectual adviser and confessor;

"And since I 've never dared to write

As horrid as I can."

"The ruins of a once strong castle still remain on the summit of a hill, which can be ascended only on one side, for, like many old Hungarian castles, Csejta is built on a limestone rock, forming an abrupt precipice on three sides. About the year 1610, this castle was the residence of Elizabeth Báthori, sister to the king of Poland, and

wife of a rich and powerful magnate. Like most ladies of her day, she was surrounded by a troop of young persons, generally the daughters of poor but noble parents, who lived in honorable servitude, in return for which their education was cared for, and their dowry secured. Elizabeth was of a severe and cruel disposition, and her handmaidens led no joyous life. Slight faults are said to have been punished by most merciless tortures. One day, as the lady of Csejta was adorning at her mirror those charms which that faithful monitor told her were fast waning, she gave way to her ungovernable temper, excited, perhaps, by the mirror's unwelcome hint, and struck her unoffending maid with such force in the face as to draw blood. As she washed from her hand the stain, she fancied that the part which the blood had touched grew whiter, softer, and, as it were, more young.

"Imbued with the dreams of the age, she believed that accident had revealed to her what so many philosophers had wasted years to discover, — that in a maiden's blood she possessed the *elixir vitæ*, the source of never-failing youth and beauty! Remorseless by nature, and now urged on by that worst of woman's weaknesses, vanity, no sooner did the thought flash across her brain than her resolution was taken; the life of her luckless handmaiden seemed as naught compared with the rich boon her murder promised to secure.

"Elizabeth, however, was wary as she was cruel. At the foot of the rock on which Csejta stands was a small cottage, inhabited by two old women, and between the cellar of this cottage and the castle was a subterranean passage, known only to one or two persons, and never used but in times of danger. With the aid of these crones and her steward, the poor girl was led through the secret passage to the cottage, where the horrid deed was accomplished, and the body of the murderess washed in virgin's blood. Not satisfied with the first essay, at different intervals, by the aid of these accom-

plices and the secret passage, no less than three hundred maidens were sacrificed at the shrine of vanity and superstition. Several years had been occupied in this pitiless slaughter, and no suspicion of the truth was excited, though the greatest amazement pervaded the country at the disappearance of so many persons.

"At last, however, Elizabeth called into play against her two passions stronger even than vanity or cunning, — love and revenge became interested in the discovery of the mystery. Among the victims of Csejta was a beautiful maiden, who was beloved by and betrothed to a young man of the neighborhood. In despair at the loss of his mistress, he followed her traces with such perseverance, that, in spite of the hitherto successful caution of the murderess, he penetrated the bloody secrets of the castle, and, burning for revenge, flew to Presburg, boldly accused Elizabeth Báthori of murder before the Palatine in open court, and demanded judgment against her.

"So grave an accusation, so openly preferred against an individual of such high rank, demanded the most serious attention, and George Thurzo, the then Palatine, undertook to investigate the affair in person. Proceeding immediately to Csejta before the murderess or her accomplices had any idea of the accusation, he discovered the still warm body of a young girl whom they had been destroying as the Palatine approached, and had not had time to dispose of before he apprehended them. The rank of Elizabeth mitigated her punishment to imprisonment for life, but her assistants were burned at the stake." — *PAGET'S Travels in Hungary and Transylvania.*

Page 71. *Noiseless and fleet, as o'er the waves, &c.*

"*Don Carlos.* Of course the Preciosa danced to-night?

"*Lara.* And never better. Every footstep fell
As lightly as a sunbeam on the water."

The Spanish Student.

Page 72. *Leonore.*

It is possible that the character of Leonore was in part suggested by that of Elizabeth in "The H—— Family."

Page 87. *He saw a native fiend, &c.*

"The blue-eyed Sorceress and her Sister stood,
Seeming a ruined Angel by the side
Of Spirit born in hell."

Thalaba.

Page 104. *She sat beneath a painted tree.*

"The sweet southwest at play
Flies rustling where the *painted* leaves are strown,
Along the winding way."

BRYANT.

Page 148. *His shrouded love.*

I quote from recollection, and very probably incorrectly, the following fine lines from Alice Carey:—

"The still grave oped and closed
O'er the white beauty of my shrouded love;
And, choking my heart's bleeding as I might
With the black dust of darkness, I went back
Into the sunshine; though my stumbling feet
O'erturned the while the fallen urn of Hope,
And strewed its ashes on the passion-flowers."

Page 151. *Through fire and smoke.*

This I take to be according to the received poetical theology. In my individual capacity, I do not wish to be understood to indorse it. I confess myself, to all whom it may concern, a disciple of that excellent divine, who, after he had prayed in his *exhaustive* charity for everything and everybody else that he could think of, entreated that, if possible, some little mercy might be shown to "the poor old Devil."

Page 163. *From hourse-grown silence.*

"Dinanzi agli occhi mi si fu offerto
Chi per lungo silenzio parea fioco."

Dell' Inferno, Canto I.

Page 163. *The Serpent-baffling rue.*

"They (the Exorcists) are to try the Devil by holy water, incense, sulphur, rue, which from thence, as we suppose, came to be called herb of grace." — BISHOP TAYLOR.

"The weasel, to encounter the serpent, arms herself with eating of rue." — MORE.

Page 166. *Borne on a bed of soft, inglorious roses.*

"Must I be carried to the skies
On flowery beds of ease,
While others fought to win the prize,
And sailed through bloody seas."

WATTS.

Page 172. — SONNET.

The statues of Day and Night decorate the tomb of Julian de' Medici, to whom Michael Angelo was, during part of his life at least, no very devoted adherent. Notwithstanding, the idea expressed above, that he availed himself of them to express feelings appropriate to the death of a man such as one possessed of the power and influence of Julian should have been, is rendered not improbable by the well-known lines inscribed by him under that of the Night: —

"Grato m'è il sonno, — più l'esser di sasso ;
Mentre che 'l danno e la vergogna dura,
Non veder, non sentir, m'è gran ventura ;
Però non mi destar, deh parla basso !"

Grateful my sleep, more grateful still to me
My privilege of blind, deaf, stone to be,
While wrong and shame surround this deathful spot ;
Therefore speak low ; in mercy wake me not !



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